

A General Change:
Ulysses S. Grant's Evolving Relationship with the Jewish Community, 1862-1885.

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Senior Honors Thesis
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March 31, 2017

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For Dad, Mom, and Michael

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Acknowledgements

First, and most of all, I would like to thank Dr. William Barney for his guidance, assistance, encouragement, patience, and expertise throughout this entire process. I would also like to thank Dr. Karen Auerbach for helping me understand the origins, development, and spelling of antisemitism. Thank you to the Michael L. and Matthew L. Boyatt Award for Research in History for funding my trip to the National Museum of Jewish History in Philadelphia. Finally, I'd like to thank Dr. Whalen and my honors thesis class for listening to me talk about Ulysses S. Grant for an entire school year.

Thank you to Miller for making me laugh, accompanying me to the library, and distracting me throughout the entire writing process. To Abby, thank you for always checking in, listening to my theories, and insisting Grant's initials were H.U.G. Thank you to Annie for the dance breaks and the Sunday recaps. Thanks to T.L, Sara Kiley, Julia, Rachel, Shannon, and Betsy for the constant encouragement. To Cheffrey, T, and Juanita, thank you for the daily entertainment and the endless supply of chocolate chip cookies. Thanks to Michael for helping me select the pictures and sending music recommendations. To Gail and Neal, thank you for the laughter, love, and support.

Introduction

On December 17, 1862, antisemitic legislation entered American history.¹ Major General Ulysses S. Grant, then in charge of three Confederate states, expelled all Jews from the area under his command. This legislation, General Order No. 11, targeted “Jews, as a class” and granted them a 24-hour window to abandon their homes and evacuate the entire area under Grant’s command. The order did not tell them where to go. It simply instructed them to get out. Jewish American citizens of all ages, genders, and professions were not welcome in Grant’s territory. When news of this order reached President Lincoln, he immediately ordered its repeal, and on January 4, 1863, General Order No. 11 was officially rescinded. As the Civil War continued, General Grant’s antisemitic order was quickly forgotten.

In 1868, Ulysses S. Grant became the presidential nominee of the Republican Party. His candidacy quickly returned General Order No. 11 to the attention of the country. In the Jewish community, anxieties rapidly grew over the potential of a Grant administration. To both manipulate these anxieties and attack Grant, the Democratic Party continually publicized the order. In the weeks leading up to the election, papers across the country reported on General Order No. 11 and theorized that it posed a legitimate threat to Grant’s victory. Ultimately, Grant prevailed and became the 18th president. Within the opening months of his presidency, Grant took unprecedented actions towards the Jewish American community. He appointed Jews to federal positions, used the diplomatic strength of the United States to protect the international

¹ The term antisemitism, however, is an anachronism. The term originated in 1879 with the emergence of the Anti-Semitic League, a German political and ideological movement. Throughout this thesis, there will be discrepancies in the spelling of antisemitism. Some authors use a hyphen whereas I have made the conscious choice to spell antisemitism as one word. Spelling it as one word “dispel[s] the notion that there is an entity ‘Semitism’ which ‘anti-Semitism’ opposes.” Dennis Prager and Joseph Telushkin, *Why The Jews: The Reason for Antisemitism, the Most Accurate Predictor of Human Evil* (New York, NY: Touchstone, 1983), 199.

Jewish community, and donated money to establish a synagogue in D.C. During his presidency, Ulysses S. Grant transformed from a persecutor to an ally.

This evolving relationship provides insight into Grant's character and the development of the Jewish American community in the mid-nineteenth century. In the existing literature on Grant, little attention is paid to General Order No. 11 and Grant's overall relations with the Jewish community in the United States. Jewish American history, however, focuses on the order but generally disregards the developments made during Grant's presidency. During his life and in his memoirs, Grant actively tried to distance himself from the order. To understand the motivation behind Grant's progress, one must understand Grant's reliance on the public for approval. His actions as president were prompted by his need to respond to the public accusations that stemmed from General Order No. 11.

General Order No. 11 remains "the severest attempted official violation- civil or military, federal, state, or local- of the rights of Jews in the history of this nation" and "a logical culmination of the history of anti-Semitism in Grant's army and his own intensifying bigotry" in Jewish American history.² In *That Obnoxious Order*, John Simon acknowledged the blatant discrepancy. He wrote that "the incident [General Order No. 11]... today is better known in American Jewish history than in Civil War history."³ Indeed, in American history, there is a general reluctance to discuss the order. Similar to Jewish American historians, American historians have a tendency to ignore Grant's evolving relationship with the Jewish community.

² Neither of these books discuss Grant's later support for the Jewish community during his administration. Leonard Dinnerstein, *Antisemitism in America* (New York: NY, Oxford University Press, 1994), 32; Frederic Jaher, *A Scapegoat in the New Wilderness: The Origins and Rise of Anti-Semitism in America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), 199.

³ John Simon, "That Obnoxious Order" in *Jews and the Civil War: A Reader* ed. Jonathan D. Sarna and Adam D. Mendelsohn (New York: New York University Press, 2010), 361.

Within American history, the indifference to General Order No. 11 is startling.⁴ A book on Ulysses S. Grant, described as “biography at its best”, incorrectly reported the basic information of the order.⁵ A passage from *Grant: A Biography* reads: “On December 17, 1862, Rawlins issued an order... ‘By directions of the Gen in Chief of the army at Washington the Gen Order from these headquarters expelling Jews from the Department is hereby revoked by order of Maj. Gen. U.S. Grant.’”⁶ The text of Rawlins’ order is correct, but the date is wrong. General Order No. 11 was *issued* on December 17, 1862 and *repealed* on January 4, 1863. Further, *American Ulysses* incorrectly summarized that “his [Grant’s] General Orders No.11, issued December 1862banished Jewish traders from his military command....”⁷ General Order No. 11 expelled *all* Jewish American citizens not just Jewish merchants. According to correspondences between Grant and Washington, banishing Jewish merchants would have been understandable and acceptable. In these two different biographies, published nearly thirty years apart, the basic facts of General Order No. 11 are woefully incorrect.

In other biographies, General Order No. 11 is attributed to either a disagreement between Grant and his father or Grant’s overall anger at merchants. In *Ulysses S. Grant: Triumph Over Adversity, 1822-1865*, Brooks D. Simpson wrote:

⁴ Jean Edward Smith’s analysis, in *Grant*, fits in best with the works of Jewish American historians. He wrote: “the sentiment expressed in General Orders No. 11 is consistent with a streak of nativism that ran deep in Grant.” In “Ulysses S. Grant, Nativist,” Tyler Anbinder wrote that General Order No. 11 “demonstrated that he [Grant] harbored a deep-seated nativism that would not be tempered by the public scrutiny his actions now received.” In both these cases, nativism and antisemitism are used interchangeably. Jean Edward Smith, *Grant* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2001), 226; Tyler Anbinder, “Ulysses S. Grant, Nativist,” *Civil War History* 43, no. 2 (July 1997): 128

⁵ Marcus Cunliff, “Lincoln in Epauettes, Washington in Overalls”, *New York Times*, March 22, 1981, 13.

⁶ William S. McFeely, *Grant, A Biography*, (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1982), 124.

⁷ Ronald C. White, *American Ulysses: A Life of Ulysses S. Grant* (New York, NY: Random House, 2016), 467.

Grant's anti-Semitism, however much it may have shaped the wording of his order, did not induce him to issue it...What sparked him to act was his belief that Jewish cotton traders were more successful than were other "unprincipled" traders...And, if many of the merchants in Memphis were Jewish, so were the partners in Mack and Brothers, a Cincinnati firm that had just employed Jesse Grant to secure a permit from his son in exchange for a quarter of the profits. Once more Jesse was trying to meddle in his son's life; once more he was looking to make a buck. His son, who was bitterly opposed to such transactions, may have found it too much to take — although it would have been more appropriate to vent all his anger on his father.⁸

In *Crucible of Command*, William C. Davis concluded that "anti-Semitism did not impel him to issue an order, which was certainly needed, but it did influence his concept of the order's impositions"⁹ In both of these works, the role of Grant's personal bigotry is downplayed.

Grant's biographies disregard the importance of General Order No. 11 in the election of 1868. In *General Ulysses S. Grant: The Solider and the Man*, Edward Longacre concluded Grant's compliance in regards to repealing the order in 1863 "prevented lasting damage to Grant's reputation."¹⁰ As later chapters will show, this assertion is incorrect. When the order resurfaced in the election of 1868, the constant media coverage tarnished Grant's reputation. He spent the remaining years of his life making amends with the Jewish American community to prove the press and allegations wrong. In *American Ulysses*, White wrote: "In 1862, the general had been excoriated for his infamous order expelling 'Jews, as a class'; fourteen years later, he was welcomed by the Jews as a friend."¹¹ Indeed, Grant's relationship with the Jewish community was transformed, but these dates are arbitrary. First, the general public was unaware

⁸ Brooks D. Simpson, *Ulysses S. Grant: Triumph Over Adversity, 1822-1865* (Minneapolis, MN: Houghton Mifflin, 2000), 164-165.

⁹ William C. Davis, *Crucible of Command: Ulysses S. Grant and Robert E. Lee- The War They Fought, The Peace They Forged* (Boston, MA: Da Capo Press, 2014), 277.

¹⁰ Edward G. Longacre, *General Ulysses S. Grant: the Solider and the Man* (Cambridge, MA: De Capo Press, 2006), 160.

¹¹ 100 pages later in the same book, White correctly summarizes General Order No. 11. White, *American Ulysses*, 574.

of the order until January 1863. Then, the condemnation was mild compared to the rebuke during the presidential campaign in 1868. In 1876, Grant became the first president to attend the dedication of synagogue by attending the ceremony for Adas Israel in Washington, D.C. Grant, however, was welcomed by the collective Jewish community much earlier than that, as shown through his second campaign in 1872.

In his two-volume autobiography, *The Personal Memoirs of Ulysses S. Grant*, Grant neglected to mention General Order No. 11 or his relationship with the Jewish community at all.¹² Concerning the exclusion from his memoirs, Joan Waugh offered that “embarrassments were left out, including his infamous General Order no. 11 of December 1862 barring Jews from his command, and his struggle with alcohol.”¹³ As he wrote on his deathbed, Grant sought to shape his legacy. The intentional exclusion of the order and his relationship with the Jewish community indicated the extent of his earlier humiliation and his sensitivity towards his public image.

Despite his stoic exterior and relative public silence, Ulysses S. Grant relied on public approval and acceptance for validation.¹⁴ After the official conclusion of the Civil War, Grant visited the nation’s capital for a celebration. Upon his departure, the General rode down Pennsylvania Avenue rather than take the empty country roads. As Grant paraded through the streets of Washington, people were genuinely surprised to see him.

¹² Ulysses S. Grant, *The Personal Memoirs of Ulysses S. Grant* (New York, NY: Charles L. Webster & Company, 1885-1886).

¹³ Joan Waugh, *Civil War America: U.S. Grant: American Hero, American Myth*, (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2013), 206.

¹⁴ Grant’s public silence was a tactic he employed since his days in the military and continued during his campaign and subsequent presidency. Grant “wanted a silence born of confidence and command, a time when he could listen to other man’s chatter but have no need to add to it himself. This is the silence not of a man deadened to the world, but rather of one come alive to engage it.” In the 1868 election, Grant remained silent on General Order No. 11 until he defeated Horatio Seymour. McFeely, *Grant, A Biography*, 67.

They had not expected to see the greatest soldier of the day out by himself- and in a good natured informal way they cheered for him. He nodded and rode on. After the reviewing-stand hosannas he had needed more accolades; he had needed assurance that the people still knew him.¹⁵

Indeed, Grant needed the assurance that people knew him. On a deeper level, he needed the confirmation that people approved of him. At a rally for President Andrew Johnson in June, 1865, Grant was obscured from the crowd by other members on the stage. To remedy this, Grant “rose and walked to the further end of the platform, while every step was a signal for an outburst of applause- a perfect triumph of enthusiastic hurrahing.”¹⁶ He needed to be celebrated.

While Grant was serving in Andrew Johnson’s cabinet, a crisis over Edwin Stanton then Secretary of War erupted. Under Johnson’s orders, Grant temporarily replaced Stanton as Secretary of War. Grant returned the office to Stanton going against the wishes of President Johnson. Johnson, feeling betrayed, berated Grant during a cabinet meeting. A report of this altercation ran in the *National Inquirer*, calling Ulysses a liar. Not unlike in the 1868 election, a surrogate advocated on Grant’s behalf during the height of the ordeal. William Tecumseh Sherman wrote to Johnson about the negative effect of the rumors on Grant. Sherman noted:

I have been with Genl Grant in the midst of death and slaughter... when messengers were speeding to & from his Army to Washington, bearing slanders to induce his removal before he took Vicksburg- in Chattanooga when the soldiers were stealing the corn of the starving mules, to satisfy their own hunger...- and yet I never saw him more troubled than since he has been here in Washington, and been compelled to read himself a ‘sneak & deceiver.’¹⁷

¹⁵ *New York Times* in McFeely, *Grant, A Biography*, 231.

¹⁶ McFeely, *Grant, A Biography*, 234.

¹⁷ William T. Sherman to President Andrew Johnson, “Confidential,” January 31, 1868 in *The Papers of Andrew Johnson*, Volume 13, September 1867-March 1868, ed. Paul H. Bergeron (Knoxville, TN: The University of Tennessee Press, 1996), 513-515.

According to Sherman, Grant was more upset about the negative portrayal of his character in the *National Inquirer* than the horrors he had experienced on the battlefield. Grant was acutely aware of his public perception and responsive to attacks on his character.

Grant started a private correspondence with President Johnson. The entirety of their conversations was published on the first page of the *New York Times*. In his final letter, Grant wrote:

While the course I did pursue, and which I never doubted you fully understood, was in accordance with the law, and not in disobedience to any orders of my superior. And now, Mr. President, when my honor as a soldier and integrity as a man have been so violently assailed, pardon me for saying that I can but regard this whole matter from beginning to end as an attempt to involve me in the resistance of law for which you hesitate to assume the responsibility in order thus to destroy my character before the country...With assurance Mr. President, that nothing less than a vindication of my personal honor and character could have induced this correspondence.¹⁸

According to Grant, he only spoke in self defense. Within Grant's career, he utilized this strategy often. He had supporters initiate contact with his critics. Grant only spoke if absolutely necessary. Even then, his comments were through the publication of previously private correspondence.

From 1862 until his death in 1885, Ulysses S. Grant's relationship with the Jewish community blossomed. As a general, he exploited his power to intentionally target and discriminate against "Jews, as a class". As president, however, he protected the same group of people. This thesis will address the complexities of both General Order No. 11 and Grant's evolving relationship with the Jewish community.

¹⁸ "War Department," February 5, 1868, *New York Times*, 1.

That Obnoxious Order

Ulysses S. Grant's tumultuous relationship with the Jewish community began on a crisp December morning in 1862. From his desk in Oxford, Mississippi, Major General Grant penned the defining statement of mid-nineteenth century American antisemitism. The three-part General Order No. 11 intentionally criminalized Judaism and expelled all Jewish Americans from the Department of Tennessee.¹

- I. The Jews, as a class, violating every regulation of trade established by the Treasury Department, and also Department orders, are hereby expelled from the Department.
- II. Within twenty-four hours from the receipt of this order by Post Commanders, they will see that all of this class of people are furnished with passes and required to leave, and any one returning after such notification, will be arrested and held in confinement until an opportunity occurs of sending them out as prisoners unless furnished with permits from these Head Quarters.
- III. No permits will be given these people to visit Head Quarters for the purpose of making personal application for trade permits.²

In the United States, moderate antisemitism was common, but the scope of Grant's order was unprecedented. General Order No. 11 reflected the antisemitism of its author, Ulysses S. Grant.

The second half of the nineteenth century marked a rapid growth in the number of Jewish immigrants in the United States. These new immigrants could not seamlessly assimilate into Protestant America.

The sheer number and rapid influx of immigrants, the concentration of Jews in urban settings, and their cultural singularity- for example, the temporary language barrier for German Jew- accentuated real or imagined differences. Having attained a conspicuous standing, Jews became even more vulnerable to public censure.³

¹ The Department of Tennessee encompassed parts of Kentucky, Tennessee, and Mississippi. In 1862, Grant commanded this region.

² Ulysses S. Grant, "General Order No. 11.," in *The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant*, Volume 7: December 9, 1862- March 31, 1863, ed. John P. Simon (Carbondale and Edwardsville, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1979), 50.

³ Gary L. Bunker and John J. Appel, "Shoddy Antisemitism and the Civil War" in *Jews and the Civil War: A Reader* ed. Jonathan D. Sarna and Adam D. Mendelsohn (New York, NY: New York University Press, 2010), 312.

This alienation only heightened during the Civil War.

As the war unfolded, new antisemitic slurs entered into the lexicon of the Union. By definition, 'shoddy' is a "short wool carded or worn from the inside of cloth, without fibre or tenacity, and with no capability of wear, and yet easily made into the semblance of more durable goods."⁴ Within the first year of the war, however, "shoddy" took on a new derogatory meaning. It came to signify a "miserable pretense in patriotism- a shadow without a substance" that was entirely directed towards the Jewish community.⁵ Cartoons, poems, and articles furthered the idea of the "shoddy," unpatriotic, and selfish Jew. Through these varying mediums, Jewish life was consistently devalued, and Jews were alleged to be intentionally exploiting the Union war effort for personal gain. The extent of commonplace disregard for Jewish life is highlighted in a poem in *Vanity Fair*, which offered the advice: "If a Shoddy, Meet a Shoddy, A-raking of his 'rye', And a Shoddy, Chokes a Shoddy, Need anybody Cry!"⁶ The humiliation of the "shoddy" Jew continued throughout the Union press. In November 1861, a cartoon entitled "Shoddy Patriotism" appeared in the *Phunny Phellow* with the dialogue: "Recruiting Sergeant: Come, Moses, rub up your patriotism, and join the Union forces. Jew: Mine cot, no! I have as mooch as I can do to supply de army mit coot uniforms, upon vich I makes noting at all, s'elp me got!"⁷

⁴ Henry Morford, *The Days of Shoddy: A Novel of the Great Rebellion in 1861* (Philadelphia: T. B. Peterson and Brothers, 1863), 174

⁵ Morford, *The Days of Shoddy*, 174.

⁶ *Vanity Fair*, November 23, 1861 cited in Bunker and Appel, "Shoddy Antisemitism and the Civil War," 316.

⁷ *Phunny Phellow*, November 1861 cited in Bunker and Appel, "Shoddy Antisemitism and the Civil War," 316.



Figure 1

Under the label of “Shoddy Patriotism,” the Jewish man, with a distinct attire and accent, refused to join the Union army and instead asked for financial assistance. In the public eye, Jewish Americans were believed to be intentionally sabotaging, rather than sacrificing for, the Union war effort. While damaging and derogatory, this antisemitic press did not translate into any recorded public action against the Jewish community.

In the Union army, those in charge blatantly expressed their antisemitism in letters and through legislative action. General William Tecumseh Sherman, Grant’s subordinate and close friend, expressed his own bigotry in letters to his superiors. In August, 1862, Sherman informed the Secretary of the Treasury that “the flock of Jews had disappeared, but will again overrun

us.”⁸ He then warned the Adjutant General of the Union Army that “the country will swarm with dishonest Jews who will smuggle powder, pistols, percussion-caps, etc., in spite of all the guards and precautions we can give.”⁹ Stemming from the top of the formalized military hierarchy, the common stereotype of the “shoddy” and selfish Jew permeated throughout the Union Army. Also in August, 1862, the solidier newspaper of Corinth, Mississippi wrote of Jews as “sharks, feeding upon the soldiers” and promised that “General Grant has determined to rate them a nuisance and abate it suddenly.”¹⁰

Beginning in November, 1862, Ulysses S. Grant used legislation to target the Jewish community in the areas under and surrounding his command. On November 9, Grant issued his first order targeting the movement of the Jewish community. He issued instructions to “refuse all permits to come south of Jackson for the present The Israelites especially should be kept out.”¹¹ With no pushback or public criticism, Grant issued a more restrictive and expressly discriminatory order the next day. The new order explicitly targeted the movement of only the Jewish community. The November 10 order instructed “all the conductors on the road that no Jews are to be permitted to travel on the Rail Road southward from any point. They may go north and be encouraged in it but they are such an intolerable nuisance. The Department must be purged for them.”¹² These two orders prevented Jews from entering and moving around within

⁸ W. T. Sherman to Hon. S. P. Chase, August 11, 1862 cited in The United States War Department, *The War of the Rebellion*, Series 3, Volume 2 (Washington, D.C: Govt. Print. Off., 1885), 349.

⁹ W. T. Sherman to Adjutant- General of the Army, August 11, 1862 cited in *The War of the Rebellion*, 350.

¹⁰ *Corinth War Eagle*, August 7, 1862 cited in *Papers of Ulysses S. Grant, Volume 7*, 52.

¹¹ Ulysses S. Grant to Maj Gem Hurlbut, November 9, 1862 cited in *The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant*, Volume 6: September 1- December 8, 1862 ed. John P. Simon (Carbondale and Edwardsville, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1979), 283.

¹² Ulysses S. Grant to Col. Joseph D. Webster, November 10, 1862 cited in *The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant* 6, 283.

the Department of Tennessee. The existing legislation did not impact the Jewish Americans already residing in the area. Grant, however, was not satisfied with his orders because there were still Jewish Americans in his department. On December 5, Grant considered of expelling all of the Jewish American citizens in his department in a letter to W. T. Sherman. He informed Sherman that his “policy [was] to exclude them [Jews] so far as practicable from the Department.”¹³ Since at least November, 1862, Grant used his power to intentionally discriminate against Jewish Americans. As time progressed, he moved closer to the policies that became General Order No. 11.

Three days after Grant’s letter to Sherman, Colonial John V. Du Bois, invoking the common stereotypes of Jews, expelled all cotton-speculators, Jews, and vagrants, from Holly Springs. Du Bois asserted:

On account of the scarcity of provisions, All Cotton-Speculators, Jews and other vagrants having no honest means of support, except trading upon the miseries of their country, and in general all persons from the North, not connected with the army, who have no permission from the General Commanding to remain in this town, Will Leave in twenty-four hours or they will be sent to duty in the trenches.¹⁴

This order lasted for less than a day. Though he wanted the same results, Grant rescinded Du Bois’ order. Grant informed his subordinate that

Permission has been granted for Cotton speculators and Citizens of the North generally to come South as far as the Tallahatchie. Instructions from Washington are to encourage getting Cotton out of the country. Department orders have been published regulating this matter and any violation of them can be punished by sending the offender out of the Dept. Any order you have published different from this contravenes Dept orders and will have to be rescinded.¹⁵

Less than two weeks later, on December 17, Grant issued General Order No. 11.

¹³ Ulysses S. Grant to P. T. Sherman, December 5, 1862 cited in *The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant* 6, 294.

¹⁴ Colonial John V. Du Bois, December 8, 1862 cited in *The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant* 7, 9.

¹⁵ U. S. Grant to J. V. DuBois, December 9, 1862 cited in *The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant* 7, 8.

While both orders expelled groups from a specific territory, there are distinct differences in punishment, scope, and rhetoric. Du Bois' order called for punishment if the listed groups stayed in Holly Springs whereas Grant threatened punishment if the Jews returned. On December 8, these groups were expelled from one city while the December 17 order called for the complete expulsion of only Jews from Grant's department. Du Bois grouped together cotton-speculators, Jew, vagrants, and "all persons from the north." These associations show that Du Bois intended to target Jewish merchants, referencing "Jews" as a subcategory of merchants. Grant's order, however, only targeted "Jews, as a class" and referred to them as "these people" and "this class of people." There was no ambiguity in the intended target of Grant's order, as no other group is mentioned. Finally, for Du Bois, merchants were the problem, whereas for Grant, the problem was the inherently sinister and shoddy Jew. In his revocation of Du Bois' order, Grant's made no mention of the discriminatory aspect of expelling Jews and referenced the orders from Washington to allow the trade of cotton. There was no backlash to the antisemitic aspect of Du Bois' order in the army or in the press. Through this earlier order, Grant's desire to expel the Jews was validated, and he learned the proper way to do it without contradicting orders from Washington.

On December 17, Ulysses S. Grant issued General Order No. 11. Though the idea existed for nearly a month, what prompted it on December 17 that inspired Grant to issue the order. In the existing literature, the catalyst is attributed to either an order from Washington, D.C. or a disagreement between Grant and his father, Jesse. According to *The Israelite*, "it appear[ed] a fact that Gen. Grant received instructions from Washington. It appears that parties in Congress were informed that the blunder was made somewhere in Washington."¹⁶ Jonathan Sarna noted, in

¹⁶ *The Israelite*, February 6, 1863, 244.

When Grant Expelled the Jews, that “diligent searches, however, have failed to turn up any such telegram, even though government records from the Civil War are extraordinarily complete.”¹⁷ Therefore, the existence of an order from Washington to expel “Jews, as a class” is highly unlikely. The other commonly accepted explanation cites a disagreement between Ulysses and his father, Jesse. As cotton prices rose, Jesse R. Grant saw an opportunity to exploit his son’s position and influence for financial gain.¹⁸ In December 1862, the elder Grant entered into a partnership with the Jewish Mack brothers to purchase, transport, and sell southern cotton in New York. Per the terms of the agreement, Jesse Grant’s sole responsibility was to procure a trading permit in exchange for 25% of the profit.¹⁹ Jesse visited his son in Mississippi to procure a permit to trade cotton.²⁰ Ulysses immediately rejected Jesse’s permit request. Shortly after this visit, Ulysses S. Grant issued General Order No. 11. John Simon, the curator of the *The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant*, editorialized: “Jesse Grant’s involvement in the cotton trade provides a psychological explanation for the orders, though hardly a justification- USG expelled the Jews rather than his father.”²¹

¹⁷ Jonathan D. Sarna, *When General Grant Expelled the Jews*, (New York, NY: Schocken Books, 2012), 57.

¹⁸ To cripple the Confederacy economy, President Lincoln issued a blockade of South ports on April 19, 1861. In 1859, the going rate for a bale of cotton in New York was \$43.03, and, after the implantation of the embargo, the price nearly tripled to \$106.19. The sharp increase in profitability, created a strong cotton market. To slow the flow of cotton, the Treasury Department required merchants to carry permits. David G. Surdam, "King Cotton: Monarch or Pretender? The State of the Market for Raw Cotton on the Eve of the American Civil War," *The Economic History Review*, New Series, 51, no. 1 (1998): 127.

¹⁹ Jesse Grant sued the Mack brothers for breach of contract in 1864. It was settled out of court so limited public information is available. *The Democratic Speaker's Hand-Book*, compiled by Matthew Carey, Jr. (Cincinnati, OH: Miami Print. and Pub. Company, 1868), 42-43.

²⁰ The exact date of this visit is unknown. It is believed to be around the time General Order No. 11 was issued in December.

²¹ Simon, *The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant* 7, 53.

Regardless, he expressed no remorse on that December day. In a letter to the Assistant Secretary of War, on December 17, Grant wrote:

I have long believed that in spite of all the vigilance that can be infused into Post Commanders that the Specie regulations of the Treasury Dept. have been violated, and that mostly by Jews....so well satisfied of this have I been that I instructed the Commdg Officer at Columbus to refuse all permits to Jews to come south, and frequently have had them expelled from the Dept. But they come in with their Carpet sacks in spite of all that can be done to prevent it. The Jews seem to be a privileged class that can travel any where.²²

The palpable anger in this letter captured Grant's feelings towards Jewish Americans at the time the order was issued. During the short time it was in effect, Grant made no motion to explain, amend, or revoke his order.

General Grant intended General Order No. 11 to be implemented throughout the entire Department of Tennessee. Less than three days after the issuance, however, a surprise Confederate attack destroyed nearly fifty miles of telegraph lines surrounding Grant's camp.²³ The inability to communicate complicated both the implementation and clarification of the order. Due to this, the order was randomly implemented throughout the department. A petition sent to President Lincoln listed Holly Springs, Trenton, Corinth, Jackson, Paducah as the primarily effected cities.²⁴ Further, the ambiguity of "Jews, as a class" created confusion within the various Union outposts. Officers in Corinth, Holly Springs, and Jackson requested clarification on the rhetoric of the order, inquiring if Jewish sutlers or soldiers were included.²⁵ These inquiries went unanswered. One officer refused to enforce the order. General Jeremiah Cutler Sullivan,

²² Ulysses S. Grant to Hon. C. P. Wolcott, December, 1862 cited in *The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant* 7, 56.

²³ Jonathan D. Sarna and Benjamin Shapell, *Lincoln and the Jews*, (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 2015), 114-115.

²⁴ Sarna, *When Grant Expelled the Jews*, 28.

²⁵ Sutlers followed the military camps selling tobacco, liquor, clothing, etc to soldiers. John Simon, *The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant* 7, 53.

commander of the District of Jackson, initially resisted as he “thought he was an officer of the army and not of a church” but “was forced after four days to enforce it.”²⁶ Further, there is no recorded instance of the order directly impacting a Jewish Union soldier while in effect.²⁷ While Jews had been targeted by legislation before, there were clear parameters and specific instructions. The vague order for all Jews to get out created mass confusion within the Department of Tennessee. This highlights the radical nature of Grant’s order, as many struggled to understand Grant’s action.

On December 28, General Order No. 11 took effect in Paducah, Kentucky.²⁸ Cesar Kaskel, a prominent Jewish merchant, was banished from the city by the provost marshal. Kaskel received notice that “in pursuance of General Order No 11, issued from General Grant’s headquarters, you are hereby ordered to leave the city of Paducah, Kentucky, within twenty-four hours after receiving this order.”²⁹ Complying with the order, Kaskel left Paducah. Prior to his departure, however, Kaskel and others telegraphed President Lincoln calling for his “effectual and immediate interposition” and categorized Grant’s order as “the grossest violation of the Constitution.”³⁰ With no response, Kaskel traveled to Washington, D.C. to bring this order to the immediate attention of President Lincoln. As Kaskel made his way to Washington, the order

²⁶ *The Israelite* does not provide any more detail on General Sullivan’s refusal. *The Israelite*, January 23, 1863, 228.

²⁷ On March 3, 1863, Captain Philip Trounstine, a Jewish American, of Moscow, Tennessee submitted his “immediate and unconditional resignation” from the army as he was both subject to “taunts and malice” and “deeply hurt” by General Order No. 11. Simon, *The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant* 7, 53.

²⁸ Today in Paducah, there are several humorous anecdotes of the order’s implementation. “One soldier is said to have knocked on the door of a Jew and demanded, ‘What are you?’ The resident of the house answered truthfully, ‘Tailor.’ To which the soldier replied, ‘Sorry to bother you, Mr. Taylor, but I’m looking for Jews.’” John E. L. Robertson, *Paducah: Frontier to Atomic Age* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2002), 44.

²⁹ Sarna, *When General Grant Expelled the Jews*, 16.

³⁰ Though it was received, Sarna and Shapell concluded that “the president, in all likelihood, never saw that telegram” Sarna and Shapell, *Lincoln and the Jews*, 116.

began to appear in the Jewish and mainstream press. On January 2, *The Israelite* vehemently called for mass action, arguing that General Order No. 11 was an American problem, not simply a Jewish issue.

Need we comment on this handsome piece of military despotism? We trust not. We expect, every man acquainted with the laws of the country and the principles of the people in regard to political freedom and the rights of citizens; - every man of liberal and just opinions, condemns with indignation this outrage without a precedent in American history.³¹

On January 3, 1863, Kaskel met with President Lincoln. Though no transcript remains, the conversation was rumored to have been:

Lincoln: And so the children of Israel were driven from the happy land of Canaan?
Kaskel: Yes, and that is why we have come unto Father Abraham's bosom, asking for protection.
Lincoln: And this protect they shall have at once.³²

Acting on behalf of President Lincoln, General Halleck ordered Grant to immediately repeal the order on January 4. Grant received a telegrammed stating that "a paper purporting to be a Genl Order No. 11 issued by you Dec 17th has been presented here. By its terms it expels all Jews your Dept. If such an order has been issued, it will be immediately revoked."³³ Grant obliged without protest. Most of the public outcry transpired after the order was officially repealed. Groups of Jewish protestors reached the White House on January 8 and were assured by President Lincoln that he did "not like to hear a class or nationality condemned on account of a few sinners."³⁴ Though the order was no longer in effect, it remained in the national dialogue throughout the month of January. Congress and the national media struggled with the proper way to address and understand Grant's antisemitic order.

³¹ *The Israelite*, January 2, 1863, 204.

³² Sarna and Shapell, *Lincoln and the Jews*, 118.

³³ Henry P. Halleck to Ulysses S. Grant, January 4, 1863 cited in *The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant* 7, 53.

³⁴ *The Israelite*, January 16, 1863, 218.

In both houses, Democrats moved to officially condemn the general for his antisemitic actions. Senator Lazarus W. Powell of Kentucky declared the “order of Major General Grant, expelling the Jews, as a class, from the department of which he is in command is condemned as illegal, tyrannical, cruel, and unjust, and the President is requested to countermand the same.” In the House of Representatives, a nearly identical resolution was put forth. An Ohio Democrat argued that “on no other proof than that they were members of a certain religious denomination... the said order, in its sweeping condemnation of a whole class of citizens without discriminating between the guilty and the innocent, is illegal and unjust, and in its execution is tyrannical and cruel.”³⁵ In both chambers, however, Grant’s allies worked quickly and successfully to table the proposed resolutions. As Representative Elihu Washburne summarized in a letter to Grant: “they moved in regard to it [censure Grant for his role in General Order No.11] in our House yesterday, but they did not make anything by it.”³⁶ Indeed, no federal censure or official condemnation of General Grant materialized. He continued in his role and quickly rose through the ranks of the Union army.

In January, some Jewish papers utilized the order to legitimize their previous claims of underlying antisemitism in the country. *The Israelite* asserted that “long before Grant’s order was issued, *The Israelite* called attention to the existence of a spirit of dark prejudice in the army against our people.”³⁷ *The Occident* suggested that General Order No. 11 was a natural progression of both antisemitic action and legislation in the United States. It proclaimed that “there has been so vast a change in the minds of the people regarding the rights of all within the

³⁵ *Journal of the House of Representative of the United States of America*, 37th Congress, 3rd Session Volume 60, January 7, 1863, 151.

³⁶ Elihu Washburne to Ulysses S. Grant, January 8, 1863 cited in *The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant* 7, 56.

³⁷ “The Last of General Grant’s Order,” *The Israelite*, January 23, 1863, 218.

last ten years... should the deterioration proceed ... despotism, military and civil, may naturally succeed to overthrow a rotten State which has ceased to be free except in name.”³⁸ On the specific subject of General Grant, the *Jewish Messenger* called for patience. Foreshadowing the role of General Order No. 11 in the election of 1868, it promised that “Ulysses S. Grant is a *marked man*. When the war is at an end, and peace has resumed her gentle sway, the Jewish community will claim and receive full and complete satisfaction.”³⁹ As the Jewish media worked to understand the immediate and future implications of General Order No.11, the national media quickly condemned Grant for his actions.

The criticisms centered on the premise of targeting and labelling “Jews, as a class.” The Republican *Cincinnati Commercial* implored the general to “word his orders so as not to do injustice and injury to ‘a class.’”⁴⁰ Other papers critiqued Grant for targeting all Jewish Americans for the actions of a select few. The Democratic *Cincinnati Enquirer* stated that “no offense can be committed by individuals, which will justify the singling out of a whole class... there are black sheep in every flock”⁴¹ Similarly, the *New York Times* concluded that “all swindlers are not Jews. All Jews are not swindlers. Gen. Grant assumes that the reverse of this latter proposition is true, and he expels the Jews, as ‘as a class,’ from the Department.”⁴² The *Philadelphia Public Ledger* echoed these views: “if a Jew does wrong, punish his offence, but not his race, unless we are prepared to punish every Christian for the faults of each and any of

³⁸ “On Persecution” *The Occident*, February/March 1863.

³⁹ “Grant’s Order: Our True Course,” *Jewish Messenger*, January 16, 1863, 20.

⁴⁰ *Cincinnati Enquirer* January 3, 1863 cited in Sarna, *When Grant Expelled the Jews*, 40.

⁴¹ *Cincinnati Commercial*, January 6, 1863 cited in Sarna, *When Grant Expelled the Jews*, 40.

⁴² The first section of this article critiques the grammar and syntax of General Order No. 11. “It is mortifying to know that such a jumble of bad writing and worse logic should emanate from the headquarters of a Major-General commanding a Military Department of the United States.” “Gen. Grant and the Jews,” *New York Times*, January 18, 1863, 4.

them.”⁴³ The *New York Times* denounced Grant for infringing on the constitutionally guaranteed rights of all American citizens, including those of the Jewish faith. It categorized General Order No. 11 as a “military assault upon a people whose equal rights and immunities are as sacred under the Constitution as those of any other sect, class or race.”⁴⁴ The consensus in the criticism from Republican, Democratic, and bipartisan papers revealed how Grant’s order stood out from the acceptable levels of mid-nineteenth century antisemitism. The Jewish community anticipated discriminatory legislation whereas it shocked the majority of Americans. These papers reflected the times, and they all criticized Grant’s actions. Even Grant’s supporters struggled to conceptualize the idea that he had intentionally targeted an entire religious community and wishfully assumed that he only intended to punish Jewish merchants. “If you would only express precisely in your order what you meant [as he supposed] to exclude these Jew traders” implored one of Grant’s defenders, “it would be all right”.⁴⁵ By targeting “Jews, as a class,” however, Grant had gone too far.

Halleck, and by extension Lincoln, echoed this sentiment. On January 21, Halleck telegraphed Grant primarily regarding the strategic goals of occupying Vicksburg. He included a brief explanation of the revocation of General Order No. 11 at the bottom of the message. Halleck offered that

It may be proper to give you some explanation.... The President has no objection to your expelling traders & Jew pedlars... but as it in terms prescribed an entire religious class, some of whom are fighting in our ranks, the President deemed it necessary to revoke it.⁴⁶

⁴³ *Philadelphia Public Ledger* cited in "The Press on Grant's Order," *Jewish Messenger*, January 23, 1863, 29.

⁴⁴ “Gen. Grant and the Jews,” *New York Times*, January 18, 1863, 4.

⁴⁵ Elihu Washburne to Ulysses S. Grant, January 8, 1863 cited in *The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant* 7, 56.

⁴⁶ Henry P. Halleck to Ulysses S. Grant, 21 January 1863 cited in Simon, *The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant* 7, 54.

It was acceptable to issue discriminatory legislation targeting a specific subset of Jewish Americans, but targeting the entire community of Jewish Americans, however, was inexcusable. By condemning the mass expulsions of Jewish Americans, the outcry to order helped define the boundaries of mid-nineteenth century American antisemitism.

Grant had issued prior orders instructing his subordinates to refuse permits to Jewish Americans and to limit their mobility within his district. These previous orders received no criticism. Even Du Bois' order escaped mainstream condemnation. Due to this, Grant did not anticipate the negative reception to General Order No. 11. For him, the order was a natural, almost linear, progression of his discriminatory legislation. In earlier orders, he referenced "Israelites" and "Jews." General Order No. 11 marked a malicious development in rhetoric. By writing "Jews, as a class," "these people," and "this class of people," Grant criminalized Judaism. The simple act of being Jewish was a punishable offense. In his eyes, "the social degraded Jew close physically but remote culturally, was held capable of perpetrating any deed and committing any crime."⁴⁷ Invoking the antisemitic cartoons, General Order No. 11 showed Grant's belief in inherent differences between Jews and Americans. They were not the same. Americans helped the war effort whereas the "shoddy" Jew exploited the conflict for financial gain. Though the majority of Jewish people in the Department were American citizens, in Grant's eyes, their Jewishness overshadowed their citizenship. Believing in inherent Jewish qualities, Grant was concerned that Jewish people posed a threat to his victory. For him, the entire community was a threat.

This ideology and subsequent rhetoric, though observed in the Union press, was believed to be an entirely European phenomenon. Many Americans were horrified that this level of

⁴⁷ Jacob Katz, *From Prejudice to Destruction: Anti-Semitism, 1700-1933* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980), 320.

codified antisemitism occurred in the United States. The *New York Times* concluded that “after the progress of liberal ideas even in the most despotic countries has restored the Jews to civil and social rights, as members of a common humanity, it remained for the freest Government on earth to witness a momentary revival of the spirit of the medieval ages.”⁴⁸ Though Jews possessed some civil and social rights, the 1870s marked an increase in discriminatory legislation towards Jews ranging from expulsions, citizenship reversals, deportations, and forced immigration in Europe.⁴⁹ General Order No. 11 fits in with the growth of antisemitic race science though it is unlikely Grant was aware of this new ideological development. Scientific racism argued that “differences in human behavior derive[d] from inherent group characteristics.”⁵⁰ By listing “Jews, as a class” without further clarification, Grant showed his belief in identifiable group characteristics of Jews. As evidenced by the confusion and clarification telegrams, others did not share this belief.

As the Civil War continued, General Order No. 11 quickly faded from national memory. As of January 16, “Grant himself has as yet declined to apologize for the insult he has gratuitously offered the Jewish name, the injustice and cruel wrong he has perpetrated on American citizens because they were Israelites.”⁵¹ This silence continued until after the election of 1868. After the conclusion of the Civil War, Grant entered politics. The patience called for by the *Jewish Messenger* was rewarded

⁴⁸ “Gen. Grant and the Jews,” *New York Times*, January 18, 1863, 4.

⁴⁹ William I Brunstein, *Roots of Hate: Anti-Semitism in Europe Before the Holocaust*, (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 175.

⁵⁰ Brunstein, *Roots of Hate*, 95.

⁵¹ “Grant’s Order: Our True Course,” *Jewish Messenger*, January 16, 1863, 20.

A Marked Man

After January, 1863, General Order No. 11 faded from the national conversation. Attention returned to the ongoing Civil War, and Ulysses S. Grant rose through the Union military ranks. In 1865, General Grant, then in charge of the Union forces, accepted the surrender of Robert E. Lee at Appomattox Court House. This effectively ended the Civil War and transformed Grant into a national hero. During his accession, rumors circulated of a potential Grant presidential run on the Republican ticket in 1868.

The inevitability of Grant's campaign brought General Order No. 11 back to public attention in the opening months of 1868. The Jewish community feared Grant in the highest position of power. Simon Wolf, a politically active Jewish Republican merchant, summarized the apprehensions over a potential Grant presidency. He wrote:

I knew that in due course of time he [General Grant] would unquestionably be the candidate of the Republican party for President of the United States. I was most anxious to get at the inside history of 'Order No. 11,' which bore his signature and which had caused feelings of indignation throughout the United States on the part of those American citizen who were of the Jewish faith.¹

Though the Republican convention was nearly four months away, *The Israelite* called for immediate action to prevent a Grant led Republican ticket. In February 1868, the paper asserted that

As a Jew, we can not and will not vote for a man who has done us a more shameless injustice than any man in power, in this century, has done us in any civilized country. Therefore we hope and expect that the entire Jewish press [national Jewish newspapers] will come out boldly and justly against the movement to nominate General Grant as President of the United States... we hope and expect from all political leaders to drop the scheme of nominating General Grant.²

¹ Though Wolf initially criticized Grant, he quickly became an ardent Grant supporter and acted as Grant's surrogate in the Jewish community. Wolf started to support Grant's candidacy because it became politically advantageous. Simon Wolf, *Presidents I Have Known from 1860-1918* (Washington, D.C: Press of B.S. Adams, 1918), 54.

² *The Israelite*, February 28, 1868, 4.

The election of 1868 forced Ulysses S. Grant to reevaluate his preexisting relationship with the Jewish American community. Though initially used by the Democrats to attack Grant, General Order No. 11 raised important questions of Grant's abilities to govern and to represent the diverse American public. Throughout the entire duration of the campaign, Grant was confronted with his antisemitic order. He had *no* response to the allegations of antisemitism and watched helplessly as his reputation was besmirched. The inability to address the criticisms of the election catalyzed Grant's transformation.

During the nomination process, the Republican Party ignored the suggestions and concerns of the Jewish community. They saw General Order No. 11 as a distinctly Jewish issue that would not permeate into American politics. At the 1868 Republican National Union Convention in Chicago, Grant was unsurprisingly and unanimously nominated for President. On the first ballot, he claimed all 650 delegates, and on the sixth ballot for the vice presidential nominee, Schuyler Colfax was selected.³ On May 22, the *New York Times* reported that "the business of the Convention has been done with great expedition. It was exceedingly harmonious and enthusiastic beyond precedent. Thousands of delegates and visitors have already left for their homes."⁴ With Grant at the head of its ticket, Republican victory seemed certain.

Grant's opponent, Horatio Seymour, did not want to be president. To his dismay, his record and powerful contacts appealed to many other Democrats. A year out from the election, Governor Seymour penned a public letter to the *Oneida Democratic Union* forcefully refusing to be the Democratic candidate. He stressed that "I am not and cannot be a candidate for the

³ Adam Silver, "Presidential Election of 1868." in *Encyclopedia of U.S. Campaigns, Elections, and Electoral Behavior*, edited by Kenneth F. Warren, (Los Angeles, CA: Sage, 2008), 589.

⁴ The Republican convention started on May 20th and concluded on the 22nd. Contrastingly, the Democratic convention lasted from July 4th to July 9th. "Grant and Colfax," *New York Times*, May 22, 1868, 1.

Presidency. I can do battle with more vigor when I am not a candidate for official position.”⁵ His letter and expressed wishes were ignored. A group of New York Democrats asked him in January, 1868 if he would hypothetically accept the Democratic nomination. In response, Seymour composed another public letter. In this new letter, he expressed his frustrations with the rumors. He firmly declared: “I assure you I am not a candidate for the office of President. In my letter, I said what I meant; and I am annoyed to find it is looked upon by some as a strategic movement.”⁶ As with his 1867 letter, the majority of Democrats ignored his wishes. Influential Democrats continued to quietly support his candidacy.

The Democratic National Convention began on July 4, 1868, in New York. After five days of balloting, the Democrats did not have a nominee. With the convention in disarray with no foreseeable end, a representative from Ohio nominated Horatio Seymour. Seymour immediately responded to his nomination by saying that “gentlemen, I thank you, and may God bless you for your kindness to me; but your candidate I cannot be.”⁷ After his blatant refusal, Seymour’s supporters rushed him out of the venue. The quick nomination and immediate exit of the candidate caused a commotion at the convention. Nonetheless, representatives quickly changed their votes to Seymour. On the twenty-second ballot, Seymour became the Democratic nominee for President, and on the first ballot, Frances P. Blair, Jr. was selected as the Vice Presidential candidate.⁸ Though he spent a year vigorously denying his interest in being the nominee, Seymour accepted the Democratic nomination. In his acceptance letter, Seymour wrote though the “nomination was unsought and unexpected,” he had been “caught up by the

⁵ Horatio Seymour, *Public Record of Horatio Seymour: From the Campaign of 1856 to the Present* (New York, NY: I.W. England, 1868), 338-339.

⁶ Seymour references his earlier public letter to the *Oneida Democratic Union*, which is discussed above. Seymour, *Public Record of Horatio Seymour*, 339.

⁷ Seymour, *Public Record of Horatio Seymour*, 341.

⁸ Silver, “Presidential Election of 1868,” 589.

overwhelming tide which is bearing us on to a great political change” and found himself “unable to resist its pressure.”⁹ With this, the tickets were official and the Presidential campaign began.

While Grant’s nomination was relatively celebrated by his party, the majority of the Democratic Party unenthusiastically regarded Seymour’s candidacy as “the best possible result that could be obtained.”¹⁰ As a lifelong Democrat and twice governor of New York, Seymour was popular within the northeastern states. Elsewhere, Democrats publically criticized his inability to unite the party, and his leadership record. In 1863, as governor of New York and a Peace Democrat, Seymour vehemently opposed the introduction of a federal draft. With the announcement of impending federal conscription, Seymour proclaimed to a packed crowd in New York City: “Remember this! Remember this! The bloody, treasonable and revolutionary doctrine of public necessity can be proclaimed by a mob as well as by a government.”¹¹ After these inflammatory comments, the governor left New York for a ill-timed vacation on the beaches of New Jersey. As the draft deadline approached, New York City erupted in protests, which quickly turned violent. Seymour returned from the beach to try and curtail the “most brutal, tragic, and shameful episode in the entire history of New York City” though, once he arrived, he could do little to stop the violence.¹² The riots eventually stopped, and the draft was enacted. Under Seymour’s administration, “law and order broke down. Mobs seized control of America’s largest city. Innocents were tortured and slaughtered.”¹³ Well aware of this,

⁹ Seymour, *Public Record of Horatio Seymour*, 343.

¹⁰ *New York World*, July 10, 1868 cited in Charles H. Coleman, *The Election of 1868; the Democratic Effort to Regain Control* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1933), 246.

¹¹ Edward Robb Ellis, *The Epic of New York City: A Narrative History*, (New York, NY: Kodansha International, 1966), 297-298.

¹² Ellis, *The Epic of New York City*, 315.

¹³ Ellis, *The Epic of New York City*, 315.

Republicans celebrated Seymour's nomination. Republican newspapers quickly called Seymour a "natural coward" and a "nullifier,"¹⁴ Republican victory seemed certain.

Rather than promote the strengths of their nominee, Democrats focused on attacking Grant. Before the nominees were even official, the Democratic Party glorified the role of the Jewish community in politics and the community's anger towards Grant. In January 1868, the *New York Herald* noted that "this thing is at least certain, that against General Grant every influence of money and votes that can be controlled by the Hebrew race in the United States will be put forth with acrimonious activity; and their power is by no means to be despised."¹⁵ By publicizing Grant's order, the party intended to exploit the anger of Jewish Americans for its political gain. This shows the belief in both a cohesive Jewish voting bloc and an influential Jewish community. To Democrats, Jewish Americans were their partners in securing Grant's defeat. In reality, the *entire* Jewish population in the United States was under 300,000.¹⁶ Further, political singularity did not exist within the Jewish community. As with any large group, a spectrum of political beliefs existed. The belief in the existence of a Jewish political power is a common antisemitic myth with medieval origins.¹⁷ Regardless, facing a near certain defeat, the Democratic Party was desperate for support.

¹⁴ *The New York Tribune*, July 10, 1868 and *The Springfield Republican* July 11, 1868 cited in Coleman, *The Election of 1868*, 254-255

¹⁵ *New York Herald*, January 28, 1868 cited in Joakim Isaacs, "Candidate Grant and the Jews" in *Jews and the Civil War: A Reader* ed. Jonathan D. Sarna and Adam D. Mendelsohn (New York, NY: New York University Press, 2010), 400.

¹⁶ H. Linfield, *Statistics of Jews and Jewish Organizations: Historical Review of Ten Censuses, 1850-1937*, (New York, NY: The American Jewish Committee, 1939), 15.

¹⁷ Scholars argue on the origin of the myth of Jewish political power. Jewish Historian Yehuda Bauer pointed to the medieval accusation that Jews, like the devil, want to control the world as the origin. Others pointed to the beliefs that either Jews sought vengeance for their oppression or that Jews inherently strive for power. William I. Brunstein, *Roots of Hate: Anti-Semitism in Europe Before the Holocaust* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 283.

The Democratic Speaker's Hand-Book, a manual promising to contain “every thing necessary for the defense of the national democracy in the coming Presidential campaign” dedicated several pages to Grant’s antisemitism and that of the Republican Party.¹⁸ *The Hand-Book* reprinted the entirety of General Order No. 11 and the transcripts of the debates over Grant in Congress. The manual included a section on the undercurrents of antisemitism in the Republican Party entitled “Indecent Ferocity of the Radical Press toward the Jews.”¹⁹ This section reprinted articles that argued General Order No 11 was justified since Jewish Americans were inherently “treacherous” and “behaved shamefully, robbing, debauching and demoralizing the troops.”²⁰ The Democrats also congratulated themselves for the effectiveness of their early appeals to Jewish voters by reprinting an article that confirmed a movement away from Grant in Missouri.

Shall we as Israelites vote for such a man? Will the 2,300 votes from Israelites in this city make a President with the name of U.S. Grant, who, attaining power by accident, issued an order expelling all Israelites, whether guilty or not, from his department, merely because they were Israelites. Without being prophets, we hazard the prediction that there be as few Israelite votes cast for General Grant next November, as he had occasion to make arrest under his famous order.²¹

The authors of *The Hand-Book* attached their analysis of the Jewish vote to the bottom of the article. They concluded that “the feeling expressed in the above is the feeling that must animate the whole Hebrew population of the United States.”²² For the Democratic Party, the emotions and fears of the Jewish community were to be manipulated to defeat Grant. To accomplish their goal, the Democrats continually publicized General Order No. 11. By virtue of the radical nature

¹⁸ *The Democratic Speaker's Hand-Book*, compiled by Matthew Carey, Jr. (Cincinnati, OH: Miami Print. and Pub. Company, 1868), 5.

¹⁹ *The Democratic Speaker's Hand-Book*, 34.

²⁰ *The McMinnville Enterprise* and *The Harrisburg Telegraph* cited in *The Democratic Speaker's Hand-Book*, 35.

²¹ *Saint Louis Union and Dispatch* cited in *The Democratic Speaker's Hand-Book*, 35.

²² *The Democratic Speaker's Hand-Book*, 34.

of the order and the Democrats' emphasis on the Jewish vote, General Order No. 11 became an election issue.

After Grant's nomination was official, newspapers across the country reintroduced Grant's order into national consciousness. "Why Grant Dislikes the Jews" ran in the *Chicago Times*, *Daily Arkansas Gazette*, *Salt Lake Daily Telegraph*, *Daily Cleveland Herald*, *Daily Miners' Register*, *Daily Courier*, and *The Israelite* less than a week after Grant accepted the Republican nomination.²³ Written by an anonymous R.B.W, it asked: "What has General Grant against the Jews? Why did he issue that notorious proclamation driving all Jews, and other vagabonds, outside his encampment?"²⁴ In response, the author wrote that he or she had not seen "published any satisfactory answer" but speculated that it originated in a trade deal.²⁵ Other early portrayals of Grant in the press used General Order No.11 to mock the nominee. The *Charleston Courier*, in July 1868, wrote that Grant "expell[ed] all Jews from the lines and to this day has never forgiven the entire race for his own stupidity."²⁶ The *La Crosse Daily Democrat* of Wisconsin was more whimsical in their taunting of Grant. They joked: "Who drove the Hebrews from his Camp, Into the Alligator swamp, Where everything was dark and damp? Ulysses. Who worthy at those faithless Jews, Who kept 'pa's' share of Cotton dues, All further permits did refuse? Ulysses."²⁷ In Los Angeles, the papers argued Grant's actions in 1862 clearly disqualified him from occupying the office of President. The *Los Angeles Star* deemed Grant

²³ Jonathan D. Sarna, *When General Grant Expelled the Jews* (New York, NY: Schocken Books, 2012), 173.

²⁴ R. B. W, "Why Grant Dislikes The Jews," *Daily Courier*, May 29, 1868, 4.

²⁵ R. B. W, "Why Grant Dislikes The Jews," 4.

²⁶ *The Charleston Courier*, July 28, 1868, cited in Sarna, *When General Grant Expelled the Jews*, 65.

²⁷ *La Crosse Daily Democrat*, August 19, 1868, cited in Sarna, *When General Grant Expelled the Jews*, 65.

“unfit to be chief of a Republic whose citizens claim equal justice and equal freedom.”²⁸ The *Los Angeles News* published the entirety of General Order No. 11 and labelled it “arbitrary, tyrannical, and barbarous.”²⁹ The *Atlanta Constitution* openly declared that “the man of that race [Jewish citizens], who, after reading the following order [General Order No. 11], will vote for Grant becomes the instrument of his own degradation, and is unworthy to be called an Israelite.”³⁰ Though he remained relatively unscathed in 1863, Grant could not avoid the political implications of his order during the beginning of the campaign. He had no response to the criticisms and silently watched his reputation and regard decline.

With the growing controversy, this silence became increasingly problematic for the Republican Party. Prominent Republicans urged both the candidate and his inner circle to renounce or contextualize General Order No. 11. Joseph Medill, the owner of the *Chicago Tribune*, foreshadowed the growing role of the order in the election. Medill warned that “the Copperheads [The Northern Democrats] are making a handle of the matter in all parts of the country and we shall lose large numbers of Jew votes among them” and called for action in the shape of “a letter...saying that he [Grant] has no prejudice against Jews.”³¹ Despite the urgings of Medill, this type of letter never materialized during the campaign.

With no action, response, or instructions from their candidate, Jewish Republicans took to defending Grant on their own accord. In a letter, Simon Wolf provided Adam Badeau, Grant’s

²⁸ *Los Angeles Star*, July 4, 1868 cited in Norton B. Stern “Los Angeles Jewish Voters During Grant’s First Presidential Race,” *Western States Jewish Historical Quarterly* 13, no. 2 (1981): 180-181

²⁹ *Los Angeles News*, July 3, 1868 cited in Stern, “Los Angeles Jewish Voters,” 181.

³⁰ *Atlanta Constitution*, June 24, 1868 cited in Steven Hertzberg, *Strangers Within the Gate City: The Jews of Atlanta, 1845- 1915* (Philadelphia, PA: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1978), 156.

³¹ Joseph Medill to Elihu Washburne, June 16, 1868 cited in Isaacs, “Candidate Grant and the Jews,” 402.

secretary, with a detailed plan to address the charges of antisemitism. Badeau listened to Wolf. In his response to Wolf, Badeau agreed that “the order was as you suppose ‘directed simply against evil designing persons whose religion was in no way material to the issue.’”³² Armed with the only public comment on General Order No. 11, Wolf reached out to the *Boston Transcript*. He declared he knew Grant’s motives “having corresponded with him on this very subject” and asserted that Grant “never intended to insult any honorable Jew, that he never thought of their religion.”³³ In reality, Wolf only corresponded with Grant’s secretary. Another early Jewish endorsement, from Henry Greenebaum, was significantly less enthusiastic. To the *Boston Daily Advertiser*, Greenebaum acknowledged that “if the nomination of a presidential candidate had been left to the Republican Jews there would have been a different choice” but that voting against Grant “imped[ed] the progress of history.”³⁴ As prominent Jewish men, Wolf’s and Greenebaum’s endorsements meant to answer the allegations of antisemitism for both the Jewish community and the country. Further, their support was meant to show that Grant’s order could and should be overlooked.

That was not the case. Throughout the campaign, three distinct anti-Grant arguments took shape in the Jewish American community that quickly permeated into the national conversation. These arguments centered on vengeance, biblical allegories, and the inability to overlook Grant’s antisemitism. In June, a pamphlet entitled “General Grant and the Jews” by an anonymous PH. Von Bort circulated throughout New York City. This pamphlet included the entirety of General Order No. 11 and utilized Grant’s rhetoric. It boldly claimed that “as a

³² In his response, Badeau used quotes to show what parts were originally written by Simon Wolf. Wolf, *Presidents I Have Known*, 65.

³³ Wolf’s piece was reprinted in *the Morning Republican*, *the Milwaukee Daily Sentinel*, and others. *The Boston Transcript* cited in Wolf, *Presidents I Have Known*, 68-69.

³⁴ Henry Greenebaum, *Boston Daily Advertiser*, August 18, 1868 cited in Sarna, *When Grant Expelled the Jews*, 68.

CLASS, you have stigmatized and expelled us! As a CLASS, we rise up and vote against you, like one man!”³⁵ It continued to promise that “wherever our influence reaches, every Jew- no matter of what political party- every Jew, with the votes he can command, will endeavor to defeat, and with God’s blessing, will defeat you.”³⁶ This publication validated the Democrat’s beliefs and the Republican’s fears about Jewish voters. Further, it promised widespread revenge on election day.

Grant, as the sole issuer of General Order No. 11, invoked comparisons to Pharaoh, Amalek, and Haman. In a letter to the *London Jewish Chronicle*, Moses Ezekiel argued that “the Jew who does not with all his heart, soul and means, oppose the election of this second Pharaoh deserves to be publically branded as a renegade to his faith.”³⁷ The first Pharaoh enslaved the Jews, ordered the murder of all newborn Jewish males, and expelled the Israelites from Egypt. The Israelites’ triumph over the Pharaoh in Egypt is the premise for the holiday of Passover. Further, an anonymous writer in the *Hebrew Leader* used a line from Deuteronomy, “Remember what Amalek did unto you,” to compare Grant to Amalek and remind the Jewish community to remember his actions.³⁸ The most frequent and striking comparison, however, equated Grant to a modern Haman. Haman sought to destroy all the Jews in the kingdom because Mordecai, a Jewish advisor to the Queen, disrespected Haman. Again, this is the basis for the holiday of Purim. At anti-Grant rallies, Jewish speakers publically invoked the biblical comparison to Haman. In Memphis, a Jewish speaker exclaimed, “if there was any high place to which the Jews

³⁵ P. H. von Bort, *General Grant and the Jews*, (New York, NY: National New Company, 1868), 16.

³⁶ von Bort, *General Grant and the Jews*, 16.

³⁷ *London Jewish Chronicle*, September 25, 1868 cited in Sarna, *When Grant Expelled the Jews*, 68.

³⁸ Amalek was the leader of the Israelites’ constant biblical antagonists. *Hebrew Leader*, September 11, 1868 cited in Sarna, *When Grant Expelled the Jews*, 68.

would, perhaps, assist in elevating a man who had so foully abused them it would be to a place corresponding with that upon which Haman ended his career.”³⁹ In Atlanta, Jewish merchants erected a transparency that proclaimed: “the Jews will defeat Grant as they defeated Haman, The Jews will elevate Grant to office as they elevated Haman.”⁴⁰ Some Jewish Americans hoped the similarities between Grant and these biblical figures would extend to his defeat. All three of these comparison invoke known biblical persecutors. These comparisons were intended to emotionally resonate with the Jewish community and propel Jewish voters away from Grant.

The deciding issue for the Jewish community concerned the ability for Jewish Americans to overlook Grant’s antisemitism. This created an identity crisis within the Jewish community. Because of Grant, the duality of Jewish Americans was in direct conflict. Each person was forced to prioritize one aspect of their identity at the expense of the other.⁴¹ Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise, argued these identities could not be separated and the Jewish aspect of one’s identity could not be overlooked. He wrote:

We have tried very hard to divest ourselves of the Jewish blood in our veins, of the Jewish heart in our breast, of the Jewish brains in our skull, of our Jewish ancestors and their progenitors. We have been trying quite seriously to make of our humble self two Isaac M Wises. The one who is a citizen of the State of Ohio, and the other who is a Jew, but we failed and we failed decidedly. The duties and wishes of the Jew ... being ... in conflict with those of the citizen, we being both the Jew and the citizen to the public forum and to the synagogue, before our God and our Country.⁴²

Another prominent Jewish American, Herman W. Hellman agreed with Rabbi Wise. Hellman wrote to the *Los Angeles Star* that he could not in good conscience vote for Grant and ended his

³⁹ Sarna, *When General Grant Expelled the Jews*, 69.

⁴⁰ Sarna, *When General Grant Expelled the Jews*, 69.

⁴¹ Most Jews supported Republican policies on Reconstruction and other economic and social issues. Sarna, *When General Grant Expelled the Jews*, 80.

⁴² The Israelite, June 26, 1868, 4.

letter with the promise that “there are good many more like me.”⁴³ In Georgia, the President of the Hebrew Benevolent Congregation informed the Atlanta Democratic Executive Committee that the Jewish community had “an account to settle with General Grant, personally” and “at the elections in November their influence will be felt.”⁴⁴ For these men and others, General Order No. 11 clearly disqualified Grant from public office. They could not support a candidate that intentionally discriminated against the Jewish community.

Not all Jewish Americans made this choice. While acknowledging Grant’s antisemitism and even agreeing with the comparisons to Haman, they pointed to the larger context. Grant was less than ideal, but he was considered the best option for the country. Rabbi Liebman Adler directly challenged Wise in a note to the *Illinois Staatszeitung*:

I am a Jew, when Saturday, the seventh day, comes; I am one on my holidays; in the selection and treatment of my food; it was always written on my doorposts; it is always to be spoken in my prayers; and it always it to be seen in my reverence for my Bible, that I am a Jew...But it is in different when I... take a ballot in order to exercise my rights as a citizen. Then I am not a Jew, but I feel and vote as a citizen of the republic, I do not ask what pleases the Israelite. I consult the welfare of the country. If that party in whose hands I believe the welfare of the country, so far as the advancement of human rights was concerned, was the safest, were to place a Haman at the helm of state, and if the opposite party, whose non-existence I believe would be better for humanity and my country, were to place Messiah at their head, make Moses the Chief Justice, and call the Patriarch to the Cabinet, I should say, ‘Prosper under Haman, my fatherland, and here you have my vote, even if all the Jew in me mourns.’⁴⁵

For Rabbi Lieberman, Grant, despite his clear failings and antisemitic order, was a far better political choice than Seymour. The *Jewish Messenger* echoed this sentiment. In “Grant and The Israelites,” the paper emphasized that “if Hebrew members of the Republican Party decline to

⁴³ Herman W. Hellman, *Los Angeles Star*, September 5, 1868, cited in Stern, “Los Angeles Jewish Voters,” 182.

⁴⁴ Hertzberg, *Strangers Within the Gate City*, 156.

⁴⁵ This was also reprinted in the *Milwaukee Dailey Sentinel*. The *Illinois Staatszeitung* cited in Isaacs, Candidate Grant and the Jews,” 404.

support its candidate, they will certainly do so on their individual account... They will not identify themselves *as Jews*.”⁴⁶ For these writers and others, the responsibility to one’s nation took precedent over religious obligation. Judaism and Americanness were completely separate aspects of Jews’ identities.

The debate within the Jewish community permeated into the national media. Mainstream publications speculated on the impact of General Order No. 11 in the election. The *New York Times* warned that “a wholesale defection on their [Jewish Republicans] part would endanger the election of Grant and Colfax in Illinois, and render the election of the Democratic ticket in Indiana certain beyond a doubt.”⁴⁷ As election day neared, reports of a Republican loss triggered by Grant’s antisemitic actions in 1862 multiplied across the country. On October 20, the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* reported that “the Israelites in the States of Pennsylvania, Ohio, New York, and Indiana... have it entirely in their own power to secure the election of Seymour and Blair and the defeat of Grant and Colfax.”⁴⁸ In Washington, on October 25, the *National Intelligencer* speculated that “the Hebrew vote of the Unites States will certainty effect the overthrow of the dominant [Republican] party.”⁴⁹ In actuality, the Jewish community was not large enough to determine the outcome of the election.

Regardless, these reports rattled the Republican Party. In the month leading up the election, prominent Jewish leaders acted as campaign surrogates for Grant. Though the candidate maintained his public silence, these surrogates claimed to have spoken with him in great detail about his role in General Order No. 11. This damage control played out in mainstream

⁴⁶ “Grant and The Israelites,” *Jewish Messenger*, June 5, 1868, 4.

⁴⁷ “Gen. Grant and the Jews,” *New York Times*, June, 12 1868, 5.

⁴⁸ *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, October 20, 1868 cited in Sarna, *When Grant Expelled the Jews*, 75.

⁴⁹ *Daily National Intelligencer*, October 24, 1868 cited in Sarna, *When Grant Expelled the Jews*, 75-76.

newspapers. Adolph Moses, a leader of a Jewish fraternal organization, wrote to the *New York Times* about a conversation he reportedly had with Grant. Through their alleged conversation, Moses determined Grant was not antisemitic and wrote that he had “enough evidence within my personal knowledge to satisfy me” without actually offering any evidence.⁵⁰ Moses argued that “the best interests of our country are subserved by the election of Gen. Grant and I have no diffidence to declare it to the community, and to you who have been good enough to award me a position in society.”⁵¹ This letter appeared on the front page of the *New York Times*. On October 23, a letter from a Jewish resident of Cincinnati appeared in the *New York Herald*. The author also claimed to have also spoken extensively with Grant about the order. The author stated that Grant explained General Order No. 11 in a manner “sufficient to remove and obliterate every vestige of objection against him on the part of every fair-minded and reasonable Israelite” without providing any examples.⁵² Grant still publically said nothing. Simon Wolf tried to explain Grant’s silence on the issue as a testament to Grant’s “absolute unselfishness and extreme modesty” since “he preferred to suffer under the stigma of reproach and misunderstanding rather than have the public believe that at that juncture he was catering for the good wishes and possible votes of American citizens of Jewish faith.”⁵³ These endorsements relied heavily on the reputation of the writer rather than the content of the message. Through these articles, it is abundantly clear Grant had no evidence to disprove the allegations of antisemitism. Rather than apologize or explain, Grant’s surrogates promised Grant was not

⁵⁰ Adolph Moses, “Gen. Grant’s Jew Order: Letter of an Able Hebrew Lawyer in Support of the Republican Cause,” *New York Times*, October 13, 1868. 1.

⁵¹ Moses, “Gen. Grant’s Jew Order,” 1.

⁵² *New York Herald*, October 23, 1868 cited in Sarna, *When Grant Expelled the Jews*, 76-77.

⁵³ Wolf, *Presidents I Have Known*, 66.

antisemitic and ensured the discriminatory legislation of 1862 would not return under a Grant presidency.

In a near electoral sweep, Grant and Colfax defeated Seymour and Blair. Despite the electoral margin of 134, the Republicans won by only 309,584 popular votes.⁵⁴ Though Grant carried the five electoral votes of California, he lost the counties of Los Angeles and San Bernardino as well as the cities of San Diego and Los Angeles.⁵⁵ These areas served by the *Los Angeles Star* and the *Los Angeles News*, which both heavily reported on Grant's antisemitic actions in 1862. Further, a Jewish student at Yale voted Democrat. In his diary, he explained his vote and wrote that his "nation [was] too dear to me to allow me to respect one who injured it."⁵⁶ Regardless of the outcome, General Order No. 11 strongly influenced the public perception of Grant and the overall election.

Similar to the historical treatment of General Order No. 11, the role of Grant's antisemitic order escaped the American historiography of the election of 1868. The leading account on the election, *The Election of 1868: The Democratic Effort to Regain Control*, only mentions Grant's antisemitism once when listing various attacks on Ulysses S. Grant. Coleman passively wrote that "another attack on Grant's military career was the publication of his 'General Order No. 11' of December, 1862."⁵⁷ In Jewish American historiography, however, the role and impact of the order are given more attention.

It [General Order No.11] was an important issue in the election campaign of 1868. The Democrats found it it a good stick with which to beat the Administration and the Republicans tried hard to exonerate Grant from personal

⁵⁴ Silver, "Presidential Election of 1868," 589.

⁵⁵ Stern, "Los Angeles Jewish Voters," 184-185.

⁵⁶ Louis Ehrich, *Diary of Louis Ehrich*, April 6, 1868 cited in Sarna, *When Grant Expelled the Jews*, 77.

⁵⁷ Coleman, *The Election of 1868*, 96.

responsibility for it. Those attempts at exculpation... were not convincing: the devil's tail of politics bulged out of them only too plainly.⁵⁸

The discrepancy between the two accounts is striking but not surprising. As seen through the writings on General Order No. 11, this is considered a specific Jewish issue rather than an American issue.

The role of General Order No. 11 in the election, however, should not go unnoticed. Unlike in 1863, Grant's advisors could not assure him that the condemnation would quickly dissipate. The negative publicity throughout the entire campaign greatly embarrassed Grant. He and his surrogates had no effective answer to the allegations of antisemitism. There were no tangible examples of Grant supporting the Jewish community. His surrogates could only promise that he would do better if provided with another opportunity. President Grant actions regarding the Jewish community during his presidency were a direct response to the justified criticisms he received during the election.

⁵⁸ Rufus Lears, *The Jews in America: A History*, (New York, NY: The World Publishing Company, 1954), 109.

Under Haman

After the conclusion of his presidency, Ulysses S. Grant embarked on a world tour. In February, 1878, he became the first United States President to visit Jerusalem. Grant, his wife, and their party stayed for six days. Jerusalem-based Rabbis informed the New York press that Grant “left Jerusalem on Saturday last, and the best wish of all our community for his safe journey, the prolongation of his life and continued prosperity followed him.”¹ A decade earlier, the Jewish American community excoriated Grant. Even his political supporters acknowledged the similarities between Grant and the biblical persecutor Haman. After two terms as President, however, Grant carried the full blessings of the international Jewish community.

After elected President, Grant evolved and became an unprecedented Jewish ally. The negative press and political attacks he received during the election had a significant impact on Grant’s presidential course of action. Grant was determined to show that the policies and actions of President Grant would be different from those of General Grant. President Grant appointed Jewish Americans to public office, used the diplomatic strength of the United States to stop the persecution of Jews in Russia and Romania, and donated to the building of a synagogue in D.C. While his legacy as a general was tainted by his antisemitic action, his presidency was defined by his support for the Jewish people across the world.

With victory secured in the 1868 election, Grant broke his public silence on General Order No. 11. Following the same strategy utilized during his conflict with President Johnson, Grant published a private correspondence between himself and Isaac N. Morris, a former

¹ H. Z. Sneersohn, “To the Editor of the Herald.” *New York Herald*, February 19 1878 cited in *The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant*, Volume 28: November 1, 1876- September 31, 1869, ed. John Y. Simon (Carbondale and Edwardsville, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1979), 329.

Democratic congressman, in the *New York Times* and two Jewish papers. In the letter, Grant proclaimed:

I have no prejudice against sect or race but want each individual to be judged by his own merit. Order No. 11 does not sustain this statement, I admit, but then I do not sustain the order. ~~nor never did~~. It never would have been issued if it had not been telegraphed the moment penned, without one moments reflection.²

Regardless of the truth, the letter accomplished its purpose. It allowed Grant to contextualize and distance himself from the order. More importantly, it marked the first time Grant stated that he was not antisemitic. In earlier letters, he criticized all Jewish Americans and criminalized Judaism. Now, he claimed to judge everyone as individuals rather than relying on alleged group characteristics. Through this letter, Grant followed through on the promises of his campaign surrogates.

The Jewish community publically celebrated this letter. Grant signaled his willingness to change, and the Jewish community offered him a fresh start. Prior to his inauguration, two prominent leaders within the Jewish community endorsed Grant. The former Grand Master of B'nai B'rith, Benjamin F. Peixotto, wrote: “*that* letter exonerated Gen. Grant from the imputation of prejudice and intolerance against the Jews, so long believed to be one of his characteristics. No man rejoices more than I do at this, and though I did not vote for [Grant]”³ Rabbi Wise, a fierce critic of Grant’s candidacy, introduced Grant’s letter to Morris in *The Israelite* writing that “we cheerfully give place to the following distinguished correspondence

² Grant crossed out “nor never did.” Though this letter was sent in September, it was not published until November. Ulysses S. Grant to Isaac N. Morris, September 14, 1868 cited in *The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant*, Volume 19: July 1, 1868- October 31, 1869, ed. John Y. Simon (Carbondale and Edwardsville, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1979), 37.

³ Grand Master is equivalent to President. Benjamin F. Peixotto, “Gen. Grant and the Jews,” *New York Times*, December 13, 1868, 3.

which will, beyond all doubt, be read with pleasure by all of our readers.”⁴ After some initial hesitation, Jewish Americans embraced President Grant.

Within the first two months of his presidency, Grant was the first president to appoint a Jewish person to a federal position. Simon Wolf, Grant’s primary campaign surrogate within the Jewish American community, applied for a position with the Foreign Service. In a letter to Grant, Wolf declared that “I am a German by birth, an Israelite in faith, and I trust a thorough American by adoption. Should I be appointed I will ever aim to uphold the dignity and integrity of the Government, and reflect upon the Country that has so kindly protected me.”⁵ Other Jewish Americans realized the historic nature and future implications of this appointment. Members of the Jewish community rallied around Wolf and used General Order No. 11 as leverage. They understood Grant’s desire to restore his reputation. Isidor Bush advised his senator that “if Presidt Grant wants to prove his impartiality towards Israelites and to disprove any unfriendliness attributed to him on account of Order No 11- there is probably no better opportunity than appointing Mr. Simon Wolf.”⁶ Though denied an office in the foreign service, Wolf was appointed by Grant to the office of Recorder of Deeds for the District of Columbia on April 17.⁷ This historic appointment was a first step in Grant’s strategy to rewrite the prevailing thoughts that he was antisemitic. Now, Grant finally had something tangible to show he did not harbor any hatred towards Jews.

⁴ This article was reprinted in the *New York Times* with the title “Gen. Grant’s Jew Order. Why It Was Issued- A Statement of the Circumstances of the Case.” *The Israelite*, November 27, 1868, 4.

⁵ Simon Wolf to Ulysses S. Grant, March 6, 1869 cited in *Papers of Ulysses S. Grant* 19, 19.

⁶ Isidor Bush to U.S. Senator Carl Schurz of Missouri, March 12, 1868 cited in *Papers of Ulysses S. Grant* 19, 19.

⁷ *Senate Executive Journal*, Senate, 41st Congress, Special Session, April 17, 1868, 202.

In his first term, Grant made two additional appointments of prominent Jewish men to senior positions within his administration. In February of 1870, David Eckstein became the consul of the United States at Victoria, Vancouver.⁸ Eckstein's appointment was followed by the nomination of General Edward S. Salomon, a Jewish German immigrant, for Governor of the Washington Territory on March 14.⁹ With the announcement of the appointment of Salomon, *The Israelite* congratulated themselves and the president. They asserted that "the appointment shows that President Grant has revoked General Grant's notorious order No. 11, exactly as we stated, on good authority, he would."¹⁰ Through these appointments, Grant distanced himself from his actions in 1862 and the reports from the 1868 campaign. The Jewish community celebrated this new seemingly open minded President Grant.

Under the Grant administration, governmental support of the Jewish community grew. This support was mostly limited to the United States. In eastern Europe, several governments targeted their respective Jewish communities without intervention or concern from foreign governments. Indeed, in the United States, there was a precedent of ignoring international Jewish oppression and discrimination. This standard began under the presidency of James Buchanan in 1858. In Italy, a young Jewish boy was kidnapped by the Pope's carabinieri. They argued the boy had been baptized and therefore, according to cannon law, could not live with his Jewish parents.¹¹ This kidnapping made headlines in Jewish papers across the world. In the United States, the Jewish community petitioned the government for intervention or, at minimum, a comment. The President of Congregation Mikveh Israel in Philadelphia, Abraham Hart, reached

⁸ *Senate Executive Journal*, Senate, 41st Congress, Second Session, February 18, 1870, 368.

⁹ *Senate Executive Journal*, Senate, 41st Congress, Second Session, March 14, 1870, 391.

¹⁰ *The Israelite*, January 14, 1870, 8.

¹¹ David I. Kertzer. *The Kidnapping of Edgardo Mortara* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997), 154.

out to Secretary of State Lewis Cass for a public condemnation. In a public letter to the *New York Times*, Secretary Cass denied the request. Cass wrote:

This occurrence took place within the territories of an independent power, and without affecting the rights of any American citizen. It is the settled policy of the United States to abstain from all interference in the internal concerns of the country. Certainly there is nothing in the circumstances of this case, as they are reported, which would impose this reserve upon the government. But it is deemed proper to adhere to the established principles which has heretofore regulated its conduct in its intercourse with other nations.¹²

The young boy never returned to his family, and a noninterventionist policy was established in the United States. Under the presidency of Ulysses S. Grant, however, this precedent was abandoned.

The opportunity for Grant to demonstrate his new concern for the international Jewish community and responsiveness to the domestic Jewish community arose in 1869. In November, the *New York Times* reported that roughly 2,000 Jews were expelled from the Russian Bessarabian frontier.¹³ Similar to General Order No. 11, Jews were forced to leave their homes with little notice and relocate to the interior of Russia. Employing the same tactics of 1858, Jewish Americans appealed directly to the federal government. Three days after the reports, President Grant met with Simon Wolf to discuss and then reviewed the Jewish expulsion in his afternoon cabinet meeting. Hamilton Fish, Grant's secretary of state, recalled that "the President had received a memorial from some Israelites... he decided that the subject be mentioned to the Russian minister with the expression of the hope that the Russian government may not find itself

¹² "The Mortara Case--Letter from Secretary Cass." *New York Times*. November 30, 1858, 2.

¹³ "An Old Law Relating to Jews Revived" *New York Times*. November 26, 1869, 3.

obliged to resort to such measures.”¹⁴ Acting solely on Grant’s instructions, Fish discussed the expulsion with the Russian minister.

The minister denied the accusations. Fish, however, received word that the reports were true. On December 16, Fish instructed the U.S. Ministry in Russia to “make urgent but careful inquiry” into the expulsion of the Jewish community.¹⁵ Fish’s hesitant rhetoric showcased his disinterest in the affair. This apathy extended to the ministry in Russia. Eugene Schuyler, the secretary of the American delegation, launched an investigation. He confirmed the expulsion but argued it was justified because “as a class... they [The Jewish community] were thought to be law breakers and smugglers.”¹⁶ In this report, Schuyler intentionally invoked General Order No. 11 to highlight Grant’s hypocrisy. To the delight of Fish, the ministry suggested the United States take no action.¹⁷ Secretary Fish then sent the official report to several Jewish newspapers.

Though the government did not recommend intervention, the Jewish community in the United States applauded Grant’s actions. B’nai B’rith unanimously approved a resolution to thank President Grant “for his liberal action in behalf of the Israelites of Russia.”¹⁸ The *Jewish Messenger* wrote that “the duty of the American government has been fulfilled; it cannot be expected that any interference with the internal affairs of any nation is advisable; but the moral

¹⁴ Hamilton Fish, “Diary,” November 30, 1869 cited in Ronald J. Jensen, “The Politics of Discrimination: America, Russia, and the Jewish Question, 1869–1872,” *American Jewish History* 75 (March 1986): 282.

¹⁵ Hamilton Fish, “Diary,” December 16, 1869 cited in Jensen, “the Politics of Discrimination,” 285.

¹⁶ Curtain to Fish, “Memorandum on the Jews in Russia and Especially their Removal from Bessarabia,” December 6, 1870 cited in Jensen, “the Politics of Discrimination,” 287.

¹⁷ Fish’s blatant disinterest in the Russian Jewish community stressed that the orders to investigate came directly from President Grant. Jensen, “the Politics of Discrimination,” 288.

¹⁸ Privately, the Jewish American community was not pleased with the blatant antisemitic language used in the document. In 1882, Wolf blocked the appointment of Schuyler to Assistant Secretary of State. Jensen, “the Politics of Discrimination,” 288.

influence of the powerful government, always, sooner or later, has its weight.”¹⁹ The forced resettlement was postponed then entirely stopped. The Russian government officially revoked the order in May 1870.²⁰ The act of investigating signaled a clear departure from the policy of previous administrations. Against the advice of his cabinet, Ulysses S. Grant became an ally to the Jewish community at home and abroad. This time, his support for the Jewish community was the outlier. Though no action was taken, Grant showed a willingness to use the diplomatic power of the United States to protect the international Jewish community.

President Grant continued to show his concern and responsiveness to international Jewish persecution. In June 1870, papers reported of a Jewish massacre in Romania. The *Chicago Tribune* informed its readers that “the Christian people of that country [Romania]... resolved to exterminate the Jews, and by preconcert, commenced a simultaneous massacre of the men, women, and children of that faith.”²¹ Writing on the massacre, the *New York Times* that “to revive in 1870 the monstrous barbarities of the dark ages is an act which the civilized world will not regard with indifference.”²² These and other reports provoked immediate action from Jewish Americans. Rather than go through members of the administration, the telegrams were directly addressed to the President. Abraham Hart wrote that “my coreligionists... are being pursued for slaughter...I ask your own influence and that of our Government to stop this horrible massacre.”²³ Other telegrams highlighted the urgency of the issue. Israel Joseph informed Grant

¹⁹ “The Russian Dispatches,” *Jewish Messenger*, February 11, 1870, 1.

²⁰ Though credited to the American investigation, in actuality, the difficulty of implementation and negative economic implications of the order primarily resulted in its revocation. Jensen, “the Politics of Discrimination,” 288.

²¹ “The Massacre of the Jews,” *Chicago Tribune*, June 5, 1870, 2.

²² In 1863, the paper also invoked comparisons to the middle ages when writing about General Order No. 11. “The New Persecution of the Jews,” *New York Times*, June 5, 1870, 4.

²³ Abraham Hart to Ulysses S. Grant, June 2, 1870 cited in *The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant*, Volume 21: November 1, 1870- May 31, 1871, ed. John Y. Simon (Carbondale and Edwardsville, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1979), 74.

that there were “thousands of Israelites murdered by the butchering hand of bigoted fanaticism. For God sake do something to stay further blood.”²⁴ Within a week of both the reports and telegrams, Grant nominated Adolphe Buchner as consul of the United States at Bucharest with instructions to address the massacre and other instances of Jewish persecution in Romania.

This appointment, though historic, divided the politically active Jewish community. Simon Wolf supported Buchner, whereas Rabbi Haim Zvi Sneersohn advocated for a more radical selection.²⁵ Buchner was not an American citizen and was considered moderate on Jewish advocacy. Rabbi Sneersohn encouraged Grant to nominate an American citizen with experience in Jewish leadership and advocacy. Grant listened. He withdrew Buchner’s nomination in favor of Benjamin F. Peixotto.²⁶ Though he had no diplomatic experience, Peixotto previously worked for the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, served as the Grand Master of B’nai B’rith, and held a law degree. He was not an initial political supporter of Grant. As Peixotto confirmed to the *New York Times*, he voted Democrat in 1868. This nomination shocked both Grant’s Jewish critics and members of his administration. *The Israelite* applauded Grant’s selection. They wrote that “Mr. Peixotto...is the right man in the right place. He is able, zealous and patriotic. The thanks of the Hebrew citizens are due to President Grant for this judicious selection.”²⁷ In contrast, Grant’s cabinet criticized the nomination. Secretary Fish expressed “a desire to revoke his [Peixotto’s] appointment” to both Grant and Wolf.²⁸ Grant, however, had made his decision, and the Senate

²⁴ Israel Joseph to Ulysses S. Grant, June 2, 1870 cited in *The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant* 21, 74.

²⁵ Though based in Jerusalem, Rabbi Haim Zvi Sneersohn travelled to the United States to improve relations between the US and Palestine and met with President Grant in 1869. A year later, during the reports on Romania, Rabbi Sneersohn wrote to Grant encouraging the President to nominate a Jewish American citizen for the position. Yitzchok Levine, “The Jerusalem Rabbi Who Met President Ulysses S. Grant” <<http://personal.stevens.edu/~llevine/sneersohn.pdf>>.

²⁶ *Senate Executive Journal*, Senate, 41st Congress, Second Session, June 16, 1870, 480.

²⁷ *The Israelite*, June 24, 1870, 8.

²⁸ Hamilton Fish, “Diary,” December 1, 1870 cited in *The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant* 21, 77.

unanimously confirmed Peixotto less than two weeks after his nomination.²⁹ Again, Grant went against the expressed wishes of his cabinet to respond to the wishes of the Jewish community. By appointing a leader of the Jewish American community to represent the United States in Romania, Grant continued to show a sensitivity and responsiveness towards Jewish issues. As time progressed, Grant accumulated examples of his support for the Jewish community and branded himself as a Jewish supporter.

For Grant, there was no ambiguity about Peixotto's role. In a private meeting between Grant, Peixotto, and Wolf, Grant outlined his expectations of Peixotto. According to Wolf's memoirs, Grant said that "I have no doubt your [Peixotto] presence and influence, together with the efforts of your colleagues...with whom...you will always be prompt to act, will result in mitigating the evils complained of and end in terminating them."³⁰ Peixotto represented the United States and its commitment to the protection of Jewish rights. In the same meeting, Grant informed his Jewish companions that "the suffering of the Hebrews of Romania profoundly touches ever sensibility of our nature."³¹ The diplomatic prioritization of Jewish rights, however, worried Secretary Fish and the rest of Grant's cabinet. According to Fish's diary, "I told him [Peixotto] very distinctly that he mistakes the object of his appointment, that as consul he had no political functions or responsibilities... and is expressly enjoined from interfering with any question of the kind."³² Again, Grant disregarded Fish's input and gave Peixotto political obligations and responsibilities. In a private letter, leaked to the press by Wolf, President Grant wrote:

²⁹ *Senate Executive Journal*, Senate, 41st Congress, Second Session, June 29, 1870, 499.

³⁰ Simon Wolf, *The Presidents I Have Known*, (Washington, D.C: Press of B.S. Adams, 1918), 75.

³¹ Wolf, *The Presidents I Have Known*, 75.

³² Hamilton Fish, "Diary," December 21, 1870 cited in Jensen, "the Politics of Discrimination," 290.

Mr. Peixotto has undertaken the duties of his present office more as missionary work for the benefit of the people who are laboring under severe oppression than for any benefit to accrue to himself, a work which all good citizens will wish him the greatest success in. The United States knowing no distinction of her own citizens on account of religion or nativity naturally believe in a civilization the world over which will secure the same universal liberal views.³³

While in Romania, Peixotto advocated for citizenship, promoted education, created and subsidized a pro-Jewish newspaper, established a Jewish fraternal organization, provided refuge in his home, and advocated emigration to America.³⁴ He acted as both a representative of the United States and a missionary, exactly as Grant intended. In his first term, President Grant affirmed himself as a protector of Jewish rights.

In 1872, Grant Grant embarked on his reelection campaign against Horace Greenley.³⁵ Having achieved relative success with it in 1868, Grant's opponents reintroduced General Order No. 11. An anti-Grant cartoon, from *Leslie's Illustrated*, depicted a scene from the *Merchant of Venice*. The cartoon showed Shylock, the Jewish character, taunting a disgruntled Grant with the full text of General Order No. 11 printed in the background. "You call me misbeliever, cut-throat dog, And spit upon my Jewish gabardine, And all for use of that which is mine own. Well then, it now appears you need my help" accompanied the cartoon.³⁶

³³ This leak infuriated Fish but did not phase Grant. Ulysses S. Grant to Benjamin F. Peixotto, December 8, 1870 cited in *The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant* 21, 74.

³⁴ Jonathan D. Sarna, *When General Grant Expelled the Jews*, (New York, NY: Schocken Books, 2012), 125.

³⁵ In 1870, the Republican party split over the re-nomination of Grant. Many were dissatisfied with his actions, specifically his new tariff policy and the corruption within his administration, and the Republican party split into the Republican Party and the Liberal Republican party. The Democrats supported the Liberal Republican nominee with the hopes of defeating Grant. Eric C Sands. "Presidential Election of 1872." in *Encyclopedia of U.S. Campaigns, Elections, and Electoral Behavior*, edited by Kenneth F. Warren (Los Angeles, CA: Sage, 2008), 591-592.

³⁶ Matt Morgan, "Then and Now" *Leslie's Illustrated* cited in Sarna, *When General Grant Expelled the Jews*, 154.

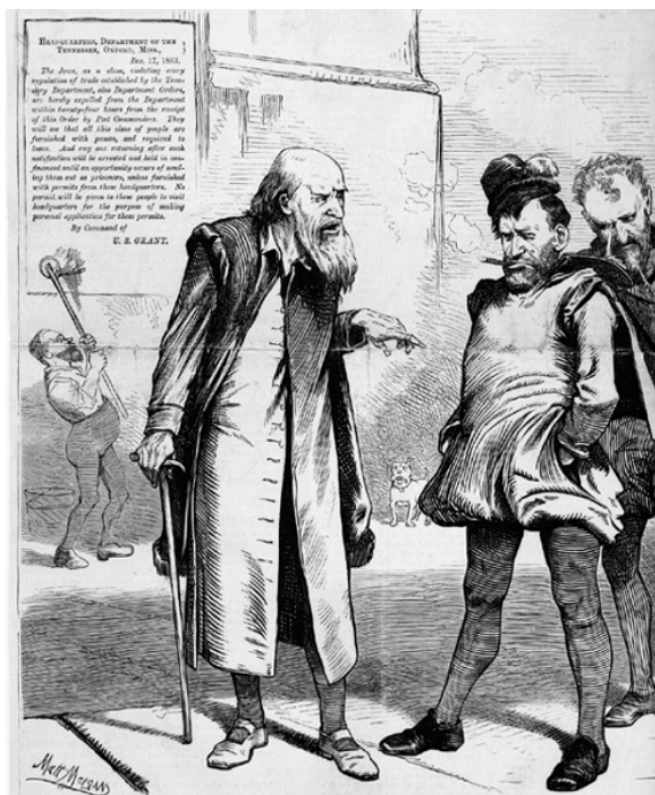


Figure 2

During this campaign, the allegations antisemitism extended to Grant's running mate, Henry Wilson. After Louisiana seceded from the Union in 1861, Senator Wilson verbally berated a Jewish Louisiana senator, calling him "the son of that race which stoned the prophets and crucified the Redeemer of the world."³⁷ Nearly a decade later, these comments resurfaced. *The Israelite* reported that Senator Wilson was "the first man to abuse the Jew publicly and maliciously."³⁸ Despite previously praising Grant's actions, the paper expressed a strong preference for Horace Greenley.

With the return of the allegations of antisemitism, the election of 1872 measured the belief of Grant as a changed man. Further, it captured the developing respect of the Jewish

³⁷ Sarna, *When General Grant Expelled the Jews*, 157.

³⁸ *The Israelite*, July 12, 1872, 8.

community towards Grant. A comparison of the campaign coverage illuminates the differences in the portrayal of Grant and the assumptions of the Jewish community. In 1872, few mainstream papers predicted that the Jewish community would unite together to defeat Grant. The *Louisville Courier Journal* was alone in its front page claim that “The Israelites will not support Grant”³⁹ Meanwhile, the majority of papers denied the existence of a singular Jewish voting bloc. The *New York Times* reasoned that “they [Jewish Americans] are neither Republican nor Democrats, as a body. Their faith has no bearing upon their politics.”⁴⁰ In 1868, it was widely reported that Jewish Americans would not vote for Grant because of his actions in 1862. Four years later, this certainty did not exist. The *Republican Banner* of Tennessee noted the change. They wrote of the difficulty “to discern on which side the masses of the intelligent American Jews will stand when the times comes.”⁴¹ While General Order No. 11 was a significant issue during the 1868 campaign, it failed to gain political traction during the 1872 campaign. Through his actions as president, Grant answered the allegations of antisemitism.

Within the Jewish press, there was also a distinct shift in rhetoric. In 1868, the duality of Jewish American citizens was called into question, and Rabbis publically debated the acceptability of Grant as President. Even his supporters acknowledged the similarities between him and Haman. In 1872, however, these comparisons and criticisms vanished in the Jewish press. Apart from *The Israelite*, papers vehemently denied a collective vengeance towards Grant and the very existence of a Jewish vote. At a regional meeting of the B’nai B’rith chapters in Alabama, Mississippi, Florida, and Georgia, a sample presidential ballot was taken. Of the fifty-

³⁹ “The Israelites will not Support Grant,” *Louisville Courier-Journal*, August 10, 1872, 1.

⁴⁰ “Notes to the Editor: Grant and the Jews,” *New York Times*, August 14, 1872, 2.

⁴¹ Moses Landsberg, “The Hebrew Vote: How it will be cast in the Presidential Election,” *Republican Banner*, July 14, 1872, 3.

three delegates, only eight voted for Greeley with the remaining forty-five voting for Grant.⁴² Further, the *Hebrew Leader* wrote that Grant was entitled to “the gratitude and the respect of the Jewish-American citizens.”⁴³ The *Jewish Messenger* argued that “it is absurd for the managers of either party to imagine that ‘Jewish votes’ can be bought or sold. There are no ‘Jewish votes.’ Let there be an end to these newspaper efforts to embroil American Hebrews in political controversy. The attempts will not succeed.”⁴⁴ Through four years of sensitivity and action, President Grant was absolved from the sins of General Grant. The results of the election mirrored the results of the B’nai B’rith convention. Grant and Wilson captured 286 electoral votes and over 55% of the popular vote.⁴⁵ While the results were the same, the difference in campaign rhetoric and coverage reflected a change within the United States and in the perception of Ulysses S. Grant.

Prior to Grant’s first term, several states attempted to make Christianity their official religion.⁴⁶ Through the advocacy of various Jewish organizations, these attempts failed. During Grant’s second administration, groups of both Protestants and Catholics tried to Christianize the country by procuring state funding for parochial schools.⁴⁷ The blurring of the line between

⁴² “Georgia: Convention of the B’nai B’rith- How the Southern Hebrews Vote,” *New York Times*, August 25, 1872, 1.

⁴³ *Hebrew Leader*, August 1, 1872 cited in Sarna, *When General Grant Expelled the Jews*, 156.

⁴⁴ “The Jews in Politics,” *Jewish Messenger*, August 2, 1872, 2.

⁴⁵ Sands, “Presidential Election of 1872,” 591-592.

⁴⁶ After the Civil War, the Southern States, to gain readmission to the Union, had to adopt new constitutions. In August of 1866, the government of North Carolina presented a constitution for ratification, which contained a provision that would prevent non-Christians from holding public office. The clause read: “no person who shall deny the being of Almighty God, or the divine authority of both the Old and New Testament...shall be capable of holding any office, or place of trust, or profit in any civil department of the State.” The Board of Delegates of American Israelites publically opposed this clause, and it was removed. *Annual Report of the Executive Committee of the Board of Delegates of American Israelites*, (New York, NY: Joseph Davis, 1867), 7- 8.

⁴⁷ Sarna, *When Grant Expelled the Jews*, 131.

church and state worried the Jewish community. Rabbi Max Lilienthal, of Ohio, wrote that “a state religion would be inaugurated, with all its accoutrements of bigotry, fanaticism, and religious persecution... No, we going to lay our corner with the sublime motto, ‘eternal separation of state and church!’”⁴⁸ Grant agreed with the Jewish community and echoed the comments of Rabbi Lilienthal. Though it never materialized, he suggested adding a constitutional amendment to further codify the separation. In a speech to the veterans of the Department of Tennessee, Grant pledged to “leave the matter of religion to the family circle, the church & the private school support[ed] entirely by private contribution. Keep the church and the state forever separate.”⁴⁹ Catholics and Protestants disagreed with him, but the Jewish community celebrated. Though subtle, these public comments further confirmed President Grant’s protect of the Jewish people.

In the last year of his presidency, Grant publically celebrated the growing Jewish American community. An Orthodox synagogue, Adas Israel, opened in June 1876 with the President and senior members of his administration in attendance. To the surprise of the attendees, the party stayed for the entire ceremony. *The Israelite* wrote that “it may be noted that the President... had been informed that...leaving would not be a breach of decorum, but...remained until the consecration was concluded.”⁵⁰ Grant’s support of the congregation extended past his initial visit. In July, the congregation received a donation from the White House. In the note, Grant’s secretary wrote: “enclosed please find \$10- the amount of Presidents

⁴⁸ David Phillipson, *Max Lilienthal, American Rabbi: Life and Writings* (New York, NY: The Block Publishing Co, 1915), 456.

⁴⁹ The veterans of the Department of Tennessee had served under General Grant when he issued General Order No. 11. Ulysses S. Grant. Speech in Des Moines, Iowa, September 29, 1875 cited in *The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant*, Volume 26: 1875, ed. John Y. Simon (Carbondale and Edwardsville, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1979), 344.

⁵⁰ *The Israelite*, June 23, 1876, 3.

subscription towards building a Synagogue for your Congregation.”⁵¹ In July 1876, he invited the leaders of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations to the White House.⁵² Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise, publisher of *The Israelite*, led the delegation. As he was introduced to the President, Grant reportedly said, “I know all about you, Doctor, especially in connection with Order No. 11.”⁵³ After the meeting, Wolf noted that the President expressed gratification in having met with so many intelligent men.⁵⁴ In the last year of his presidency, Grant cemented his legacy as a supporter and friend to the Jewish community.

After the inauguration of Rutherford B. Hayes in 1877, Grant and his family embarked on a world tour stopping in major world capitals and trading centers. A year into the trip, Grant became the first U.S. President to visit Jerusalem. Despite the freezing temperatures and the difficulty of travel, Grant and his party visited several sites within the city and stayed for six days.⁵⁵ In *When Grant Expelled the Jews*, Sarna noted that the trip served as “a reassuring message of friendship and generosity towards Jews in America, the Holy Land, and everywhere else in the world.”⁵⁶ The reports of Grant’s visit highlight the change in Grant’s reputation. Upon his departure, the reports from Jerusalem spoke favorably of both Grant and his time in the city.

⁵¹ Culver C. Sniffen to Morris Cohen, July 7, 1876 cited in *The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant*, Volume 27: January 1- October 31, 1876, ed. John Y. Simon (Carbondale and Edwardsville, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1979), 161.

⁵² The Union of American Hebrew Congregations was started in 1873 by Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise to train American-born Rabbis. In 1875, the Union established the first rabbinic seminary in the United States, Hebrew Union College. The Union was in D.C. for their annual meeting. *Encyclopedia of World Religions* (Chicago, IL: Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc, 2006), 39.

⁵³ Wolf, *The Presidents I Have Known*, 88.

⁵⁴ Wolf, *The Presidents I Have Known*, 88.

⁵⁵ Grant, in a letter to his secretary, wrote that “it rained, blew and snowed all the time. We left snow six inches deep in Jerusalem.” Ulysses S. Grant to Adam Badeau, February 22, 1878 cited in *The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant* 28, 348-349.

⁵⁶ Sarna, *When Grant Expelled the Jews*, 143.

Rabbi Sneersohn categorized the “leaders of Israel in America” as Grant’s friends.⁵⁷ When he returned to the United States, Grant continued to support the Jewish community as a civilian. In 1882, another surge of violence against the Jewish community in erupted Russia. According to the *Jewish Messenger*, “Grant was the first to sign the call for a public meeting of citizens of New York in January, 1882, to express their sympathy with the persecuted Hebrews of Russia.”⁵⁸ Until his death from throat cancer in 1885, Grant continued to support the Jewish community.

As a general, Ulysses S. Grant favored antisemitic policies, which intentionally excluded the Jewish American community. As President, Grant embraced the role of inclusion thus eliminating any antisemitic residue that he had been labeled during the election of 1868. Grant both welcomed Rabbis to his house and used the diplomatic strength of the United States to protect the Jewish communities in Eastern Europe. Going against the advice of his cabinet and others in his administration, he took unprecedented measures to support the Jewish community in the United States and the world. Speaking to the men that helped him expel the Jews, Grant stressed the importance of the separation between religion and government. Through these actions, Grant rewrote his legacy and rebuilt his reputation.

⁵⁷ H. Z. Sneersohn “To the Editor of the Herald,” *New York Herald* cited in *The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant* 28, 349.

⁵⁸ A meeting took place, but Grant did not attend. *Jewish Messenger*, July 31, 1885, 1.

Conclusion

As news of Ulysses S. Grant's death in 1885 spread through the country, the Jewish American community lamented the loss of a friend. The *Jewish Record* wrote that "none will mourn his loss more sincerely than the Hebrew and tomorrow in every Jewish synagogue and temple in the land the sad event will be solemnly commemorated with fitting eulogy and prayer."¹ The national mourning of Grant mirrored that of the Jewish community. Indeed, his seven-mile funeral procession through the streets of New York City lasted from 10 am to 5 pm due to the massive crowds.² In the days after Grant's death, the mayor of New York City founded the Grant Memorial Association to establish national monument in Grant's honor. The association raised \$600,000 from roughly 90,000 people across the world for the building of Grant's final resting place.³ At the time of his death, Grant was a beloved and respected public figure. However, a 1996 rating of U.S presidents categorized Grant's presidency as a failure and ranked his administration 34 out of 41.⁴ In American memory, Ulysses S. Grant is remembered as a "chronic loser and inept businessman, fond of drinking to excess... triumphant but brutal Union general of the Civil War... credulous and hapless president."⁵

After Grant's death in 1885, his friends and family understood the potential impact of General Order No. 11 on his legacy. When asked about the order, they all insisted that Grant

¹ *Jewish Record*, July 24, 1885 cited in Jonathan Sarna, *When Grant Expelled the Jews* (New York, NY: Schocken Books, 2012), 147.

² David M. Kahn, *General Grant National Memorial: Historical Resource Study* (New York, NY: National Park Service, 1980), 14.

³ Kahn, *General Grant National Memorial*, 2.

⁴ Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr, "Rating the Presidents: Washington to Clinton," *Political Science Quarterly* Vol. 112, No 2 (Summer 1997): 189.

⁵ It will be interesting to see how and if this forthcoming biography by Ron Chernow deals with General Order No.11 and Grant's relationship with the Jewish American community. "Grant by Ron Chernow" *Penguin Random House*, accessed March 7, 2017, <<http://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/311248/grant-by-ron-chernow/9781594204876/>>.

regretted his actions in 1862. John M. Thayer publically recalled that “Grant sincerely regretted having ever issued the order, and in conversation with him said it was a great mistake...it was a source of great regret to him that he had been instrumental in inflicting a wrong upon [the Jews].”⁶ In her memoirs, Julia Grant categorized the order as “obnoxious” and wrote that “the General [Ulysses] said... he had no right to make an order against any special sect.”⁷ These attempts were unsuccessful. In general Jewish memory, Grant is remembered as a modern American Haman. The *Encyclopaedia Judaica* devoted an entire section on Grant and his antisemitic actions. The entry opened with the statement that “Grant's name has been linked irrevocably with anti-Jewish prejudice” and on General Order No. 11, wrote that “no single act or word, let alone edict, of another president or federal official, in all of American history, compares with the Grant order for rank generalization, harshness, or physical consequences.”⁸ Indeed, the order is the defining legislation of American antisemitism, but Grant’s relationship with the Jewish community should not be entirely dismissed for his actions in 1862.

In under two decades, Grant transformed from an enemy to a friend of the Jewish people. His abrupt transformation was entirely rooted in the public reaction to his General Order No.11. Through the constant critiques and threats of disqualification, the American public and media informed Grant his earlier behavior was unacceptable. During the campaign, Grant had no adequate response to allegations of antisemitism. He could only merely promise to “have no

⁶ John M. Thayer, *Omaha Bee*, August 6, 1885 cited in Sarna, *When Grant Expelled the Jews* 151.

⁷ Julia Dent Grant, *The Personal Memoirs of Julia Dent Grant (Mrs. Ulysses S. Grant)* ed. John Y. Simon (Carbondale and Edwardsville, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1975), 107.

⁸ “Grant, Ulysses Simpson,” *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, Volume 8 ed. Michael Berenbaum and Fred Skolnik (Detroit, MI: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007). 34.

prejudice against sect or race.⁹ His presidential actions of support and friendship to the Jewish community were prompted to respond to any past or future charges of antisemitism. He became “highly sensitive, even hypersensitive, to Jewish concerns” solely to prevent the return of any allegations of antisemitism.¹⁰ From his first months as president, Ulysses S. Grant took intentional and strategic action to show that he was a friend of the Jewish people. At the time, the Jewish community did not question this change. During a time of increasing global antisemitic violence, President Grant chose a different path by supporting Jews.

On this abrupt transformation, Jonathan Sarna argued that “the transformation of Ulysses S. Grant ... from Haman to Mordecai, from a general who expelled ‘Jews as a class’ to a president who embraced Jews as individuals- reminds us that even great figures in history can learn from their mistakes.”¹¹ Indeed, his book, *When Grant Expelled the Jews*, concluded with the sentence: “In America, hatred can be overcome.”¹² Grant’s transformation, however, was not about overcoming prejudice or protecting the Jewish community. His change was a calculated political attempt to appease his critics. Had Grant truly regretted his actions, he would have apologized or repealed the order in 1863 during the initial wave of criticism.

According to those close to him, Grant acknowledged that issuing of General Order No. 11 was a mistake and expressed regret over the order. Grant, however, did not regret General Order No. 11 because it criminalized Judaism. He regretted the order because it threatened his political ambitions. Grant’s transformation and his subsequent actions of friendship were intended to salvage his public reputation within the Jewish American community and across the United

⁹ Ulysses S. Grant to Isaac N. Morris, September 14, 1868 cited in *The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant*, Volume 19: July 1, 1868- October 31, 1869, ed. John Y. Simon (Carbondale and Edwardsville, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1979), 37.

¹⁰ Sarna, *When Grant Expelled the Jews*, 157.

¹¹ Sarna, *When Grant Expelled the Jews*, 160.

¹² Sarna, *When Grant Expelled the Jews*, 160.

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